

READER

The most colorful parties in the city are Noire

Nick Alder and Rae Chardonay Taylor of Party Noire get to fun by going through respect, safety, community, and empowerment.

By MATT HARVEY 26

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THIS WEEK ON CHICAGOREADER.COM



‘I love everything about dancing’

Since losing both legs at the age of 19, Kris Lenzo has dedicated his life to athleticism, performing, and advocating on behalf of people with disabilities.

Take Action to End Criminalization, Detention, and Deportations Protest

An estimated 12,000 people marched in downtown Chicago on July 13 to protest the Trump administration's immigration policies.

Mavis Staples sanctified Friday night at Pitchfork

Even when she wasn't singing gospel, her powerful spiritual voice could bring together generations.

STREET VIEW

Pitch4k fashion rules

Be cool and “have something where you can put your phone.”



ISA GIALLORENZO

LOOKING STYLISH while faced with extreme heat and possible thunderstorms can be tough, but these Pitchfork festivalgoers rose to the challenge. Here's how.

“I try to think what's gonna be the most comfortable,” says Joshua Madrid, left. “But I also like to stand out a bit.” When the 35-year-old saw that Balenciaga made a platform pair of Crocs, “I fell super in love with them” and “bought mine for \$30 on sale from a website called YRU” (the originals are \$800). From there, “I wanted to wear a little mesh since it is so hot today.”

At right, pictured on the left, Sal Yvat, 24, says a good festival outfit is “all about comfort and having something where you can put your phone in.” In this case, “I really wanted to wear this skirt (which is actually a dress). I was going for an Afro-chic-boho vibe. I found this wicker hat at a thrift store, and I just love yellow right now, so it all worked together.”

Her friend Don W., also 24, says, “I wanted to be kinda trendy for the festival, but I also wanted to be very breezy, so I went with the oversize tee with the shorts underneath. The T-shirt has little holes in it, so I put a bikini top underneath, which also gives it a pop of color. The hat was practical, because I wanted to cover my hair up in case I sweat it out.”

In her view, it's all about “utility, and having fun dressing for the occasion. Right now, maximalism, neon, bold patterns, and colors are really trendy for festivals.” —ISA GIALLORENZO

[See more street style at the Chicago Looks blog.](#)



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SIGHTSEEING

A tale of two soldiers

Letters home from two WWI soldiers, one white, one Black, explain the 1919 Chicago race riot as well as any history book.

By **JEFF NICHOLS**

If you want to understand race in Chicago in the months after the end of the First World War, the letters written by two soldiers from the south side are illuminative. Throughout the war, Lieutenant Charles L. Samson wrote his wife, Loula, at 6730 S. Perry multiple times a week. A mechanical engineer, he'd had a close scrape with death after a German submarine sunk his troop ship off the Scottish coast. In France, he was posted far from the front lines, much to his disappointment.

Six days after Germany signed the armistice effectively ending the war, Samson challenged his wife's proposed move to a new place, as he would be forced to ride streetcars "jammed with n-----s" to get to work. "If I were still at the Amalgamated plant I would have to ride State & 35th lines. Both are n---- lines."

On January 14, 1919, he wrote he was "working one n---- outfit here. It will surprise you when I tell you that they are as good a lot of

worker as I ever encountered." He believed their efficiency could be credited to fellow white officers who "do not fraternize with the men and hence have no compunction about pushing them."

From the time he was a teenager, Stanley B. Norvell had grown up at 614 W. 61st Place, just down the street from the home of Charles Deneen, the governor of Illinois between 1905 and 1913. In May 1915, the 26-year-old joined the Eighth Regiment of the Illinois National Guard, whose officers and enlisted men were all African American. The letters that Corporal Norvell wrote to the *Chicago Defender* from training camps in Texas in the summer and fall 1916 are, for the most part, lighthearted and reassuring.

Writing from the front lines in the fall of 1918, Lieutenant Norvell wrote to the *Defender* that he could not go into great detail about his experiences due to the military censorship, but that he had "found France, notwithstand-

ing its war-ridden condition, an infinitely more agreeable place for me to live in than my own country." Norvell subsequently won the Croix de Guerre for commanding a machine-gun company through a ten-day action after all its officers were killed or wounded. When Norvell and his comrades returned to Chicago on February 19, 1919, they were greeted by a thunderous welcome in a massive parade in the South Loop.

There is no record of what Charles L. Samson or Stanley B. Norvell did during the Chicago race riots. Given the raw ugliness of Samson's letters, it is easy to imagine the lieutenant being one of the hundreds of armed whites taking to the streets or, perhaps, being like the Beverly garage owner who, miles away from the riot zone, told a light-skinned black lawyer that the unrest would be over "only when the whites kill off two or three hundred of the n-----s." We can't say where he was, but his worldview was shared by the rioters: the end result of the war could not be one in which Black men and women could imagine the same rank in society as whites.

Likewise, it is tempting to think that Norvell's experience was similar to that of the artist Archibald Motley, who also lived in an all-white neighborhood in Englewood. Menaced by angry mobs, the Motleys were helped by friendly white neighbors. Archibald guarded the house with a shotgun. However, we can gather Norvell had been changed, not only by the experience of fighting on the western front, but also through the direct or indirect experience of combat in Chicago. "Try to imagine the smoldering hatred within the breast of an overseas veteran who is set upon and mercilessly beaten by a gang of young hoodlums simply because he is colored," he wrote to Victor Lawson, the publisher of the *Chicago Daily News* and member of a newly formed commission to study the causes of the riot.

Norvell had returned to a city populated by whites who were still unwilling to understand Blacks beyond superficial impressions. "They cannot tell whether I am well off or hard up; whether I am educated or illiterate; whether I

am a northerner or a southerner; whether I am a native-born Negro or a foreigner; whether I live among beautiful surroundings or in the squalor of the 'black belt.'"

Once whites were "willing to take off the goggles of race prejudice and to study the Negro with the naked eye of fairness, and to treat him with justice and equity," Norvell contended, "he will come to the conclusion that the Negro has 'arrived' and then voila, you have the solution to the problem." The Black man, Norvell argued, "had become tired of equal rights. He wants the same rights. He is tired of equal accommodations. He wants [the] same accommodations. He is tired of equal opportunity. He wants the same opportunity."

By November 1919, Norvell had partially retreated in his rhetoric. "We need a leader who will teach us that there is opportunity in every atom of atmosphere, in every grain of dust, in every blade of grass," he wrote Sears, Roebuck & Co. president Julius Rosenwald, a philanthropist who had given millions to Black educational institutions. "We need a leader who will teach us how to make money out of the things that our more fortunate neighbors overlook and discard." Norvell admitted that when he was almost ready to surrender, his thoughts turned to "the many times when on hard toilsome 'hikes' in France when I was weak with hunger and suffering with cold a dogged spirit of stick-to-it sustained me then and that same spirit is sustaining me now."

Norvell admitted that he had found it hard to return to the life he had left behind in Chicago. "Blackening boots, running elevators, waiting table, chauffeuring and the like seemed rather incongruous to me, and I found the readjustment very difficult indeed," he wrote Rosenwald. Stanley B. Norvell subsequently married and moved from Englewood to Bronzeville. He remained at the post office, where he had worked before he went to war. In 1936, he helped cofound a post of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Its first commander, Michael Browning, had survived being shot during the race riots. Norvell passed away in April 1966, four months after Martin Luther King arrived in Chicago to support the Chicago Freedom Movement. 

The Charles L. Samson Papers can be found at the Chicago History Museum. Stanley B. Norvell's letters can be found in the Julius Rosenwald Papers at the University of Chicago, Special Collections Research Center.

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Flug, center, with CPL board member Christopher Valenti and former board member Julia Zhu
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POLITICS

The anti-Trump

The life and times of archivist Michael Flug

By BEN JORAVSKY

It's been a rough few days for race relations in our country—Donald Trump's still the president, and Michael Flug died.

I'll get to Flug—but first, a word or two about Trump.

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He apparently came to the conclusion that the fastest, surest way to win reelection is to fire up the worst fear, anger, and resentment that whites have about Blacks.

For the last few weeks he's been on a rampage—on Twitter and in rallies—against the “Squad”—four rookie congresswomen of color.

Among other things, he told them to “go back to the countries” they came from. Even though three of the four were born in the U.S. In fact, Congresswomen Ayana Pressley of Massachusetts was born in Cincinnati, was raised right here in Chicago, and graduated from Francis W. Parker School on the north side.

So, if she went back to the country she came from it would be Clark and Belden. On top of everything else, the president is geographical-ly challenged.

It was while reading coverage of Trump's hate-filled screeds that I came upon Flug's obituary, written by the incomparable Maureen O'Donnell for the *Sun-Times*.

Classic O'Donnell, it was more like a short story or a parable than a newspaper obit. I urge everyone to read it. And then when you're

done, check out the ones she wrote for Russ Ewing and Al Mampre. Man, I can talk forever with and about the great Maureen O'Donnell.

In almost every sense of the word, Flug is the antithesis to Trump.

For 20 years, Flug was the senior archivist at the Carter G. Woodson library at 95th and Halsted. He helped develop and arrange the voluminous collection of material in the Vivian G. Harsh Research Collection.

We're talking tens of thousands of articles, books, first drafts of manuscripts, letters, and other artifacts from literary luminaries like Langston Hughes, Richard Wright, Zora Neale Hurston, Gwendolyn Brooks, Richard Durham, and so on.

Flug knew the location of everything in that collection—he was the helpful guy at the curator's desk who led you to and through the treasure trove. He helped hundreds of people find the material they needed—from important scholars to lowly *Reader* writers.

I met him in the early 90s when I was doing a story that required a deep dive into the archives.

He was a fun-to-talk-to guy with a New York accent and the gift of gab. He seemed to know everything about everything. I spent half of my time saying, “Man, how do you know all this stuff?”

Because he ran the archives at a south-side library primarily dedicated to African-American history, many people figured he was a light-skinned Black guy.

In fact, he was Jewish. He was born in Brooklyn to parents who were New York lefties. “He would not like it if you called him a liberal—he was a radical,” says Suzanne French, Flug's wife. “He joked that he grew up in a family in which he always thought the two-party system was the Communists and the socialists.”

I think I know the type.

Flug's family didn't have much money. His father died when he was nine. He won a scholarship to Columbia University.

“When Michael was young, his family moved from Brooklyn to Long Island, and he faced terrible anti-Semitism from some of the kids,” says French. “A lot of his friends were Jews and Blacks. He learned at an early age that so much about what white society wants you to believe about Black society is not true.”

Throughout the 60s, Flug protested against various racial injustices as a member of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), the civil rights group. He was a conscientious objector during the Vietnam war. “To be a conscientious objector you had to go to court to prove you are nonviolent,” says French. “They assigned him to two years of alternative service.”

For what it's worth, Trump didn't fight in the Vietnam war either. But he didn't bother filing for conscientious objector status. He just found some doctor who said he had bone spurs. Then he spent the 60s partying like a rock star. Funny how the guys who talk the most about loving America are the ones who are least willing to fight for it.

When Flug retired from Woodson in 2010, the poet Haki Madhubuti honored him with a poem appropriately titled “A Poem for Michael Flug.”

It begins: “books altered the culture of his life, / a DNA effect that transported him southwest of / wherever he was meant to be”.

And it ends: “you leave prodigious fingerprints.”

Beyond his work as an archivist, Flug had wide-ranging tastes. “Michael loved dogs—big dogs—he didn't love little dogs,” says French. “But then we got a cat. He loved that little cat. He also loved music. Opera. Tina Turner. Tim McGraw. He loved Tim McGraw—*Southern Voice*. He wanted Tim McGraw to run for senator from Tennessee.”

He was also a baseball fan. “He loved the Sox, not the Cubs,” says French. “And he hated the Dodgers. He never forgave them for moving the team out of Brooklyn.”

So when the Cubs played the Dodgers for the pennant, who did he root for?

“Well, in that case, he had to root for the Cubs.”

Flug died on July 11 from a cerebral hemorrhage. He was 74.

I hope the city finds a way to pay him tribute—maybe name a library branch or at least a collection for him.

After all, we've got that big, ugly Trump sign on a prominently placed downtown skyscraper. The least we can do is pay tribute to one of the good guys in our town.

In the meantime, Flug's friends and colleagues will have a memorial service on Saturday, August 3, from 10 AM to 1 PM at the Harold Washington Library Center.

Where else but a library—right? Rest in peace, Michael.

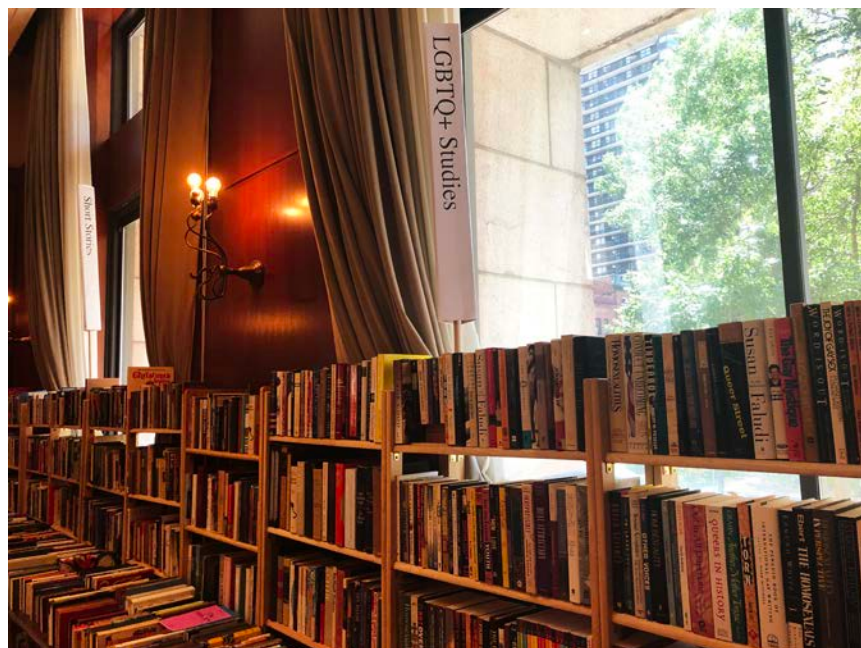
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NEWS & POLITICS

There is a new LGBTQ+ Studies section to peruse at the Newberry Book Fair. **ANNE RYAN**

ON CULTURE

Another side of the 1919 race riot

Was labor unrest at the stockyards to blame for the violence that erupted 100 years ago? Plus, paradise for bookworms.

By **DEANNA ISAACS**

You may have heard about the instigating event of the 1919 Chicago race riot. On Sunday, July 27, Eugene Williams, a Black teenager, inadvertently floated across an invisible line into the “white section” of the water at the 29th Street Beach, where he was stoned by a white man and drowned. A week of rioting followed, ending with 38 more people dead and more than 500 wounded.

What’s not as well known is the convoluted history of Chicago labor tension that led up to the riot, says Concordia University professor David Bates, who’s documented that history in a new book, *The Ordeal of the Jungle* (a title he took from Carl Sandburg’s reporting in the *Daily News*). The 1919 riot will be the subject of a Newberry Library presentation at this weekend’s Bughouse Square, the legendary soapbox orator showcase held annually in conjunction with the huge Newberry Book Fair, a benefit sale of donations collected by the library throughout the year. Since

the demise of the even larger (though less esoteric) Brandeis Book Sale in 2006, it’s the prime event for book lovers in the Chicago area and beyond.

In the run-up to that—and in conjunction with “Chicago 1919: Confronting the Race Riots,” a National Endowment for the Humanities-sponsored, multiorganization project marking this grim anniversary—Bates came to the Newberry last week to talk about his research.

In 1919, he said, when Chicago was, in Sandburg’s phrase, “hog butcher to the world,” the meatpacking industry was the city’s largest employer, with 40,000 workers at its sprawling 400-acre south-side stockyards. But the packing companies were ruthless employers who’d “deskilled” what had started as a skilled-labor job by breaking the butchering process down into a series of repetitive, single steps in factory-style production. Bates says management also had a history of fomenting racial tension among employees as a way to

keep the workforce divided and, therefore, weak. He cites their cynical use of Black workers as strikebreakers during a bitter standoff in 1904, when the regular workforce was almost exclusively white, as an example.

During the second decade of the 20th century, with the advent of World War I and the Great Migration, Chicago’s Black population grew significantly. There were just 67 Blacks among stockyards employees in 1910, Bates says; by 1919, they numbered 12,000. Their union was part of the Chicago Federation of Labor, which stood for equal pay and non-discriminatory labor practices, and was led by men who believed (simplistically) that racial problems would disappear if they had a unified labor force. But, Bates says, the CFL’s professed ideals were undercut in part by the policies of its parent union, the American Federation of Labor, which was not particularly interested in organizing unskilled workers and didn’t want to include them in trade-specific skilled labor unions. To get around this, the CFL organized union workers in the stockyards into units based on their residential neighborhoods. In rigidly segregated Chicago that meant that Black and white workers wound up in separate locals. Unsurprisingly, the percentage of Blacks among stockyards union members in 1919 was not robust, and the union wound up exacerbating—rather than eliminating—racial tensions. Forty-one percent of the injuries in the riot happened in the stockyards district. Segregation enforced by murder at the beach was the match that ignited the riot, but Bates argues that years of built-up and festering labor-related racial suspicions, resentments, injustices, and animosities was the fuel that made it burn.

WBEZ’s Natalie Y. Moore and Northwestern University’s Medill School of Journalism dean Charles Whitaker will lead a public discussion of the 1919 race riot at Bughouse Square, which begins at noon on Saturday in the Newberry’s “front yard,” Washington Square Park, across the street from the library’s main entrance.

The book fair runs Thursday through Sunday, and is bigger than ever this year, with 160,000 books and other items—LPs, board games, the odd art object—up for grabs at prices typically around \$3 (half-price on Sunday). Book fair manager Dan Crawford, who’s been there since the fair began in 1985 (and is the author of a wry, year-round book fair blog), says the inventory this year, spread through five rooms on the library’s main floor and including a new LGBTQ+ category, includes 16 boxes of UFO books mysteriously collected by a Newberry volunteer; 35 boxes of old science fiction paperbacks from an anonymous donor; and 85 boxes of books from the estate of former television and *Sun-Times* restaurant critic James Ward that contain a sizable collection of cowboy art but no cookbooks. Hankering for a first-edition *Death of a Salesman* signed by the author? It’s there, at the collectibles table, for \$2,500. Upton Sinclair will no doubt be around as well.

The checkout line, which can get lengthy, will queue up in a new exhibition area this year, where shoppers can peruse items from the library’s collection—such as a rare copy of the Declaration of Independence printed days after it was approved by Congress but with the wrong date—while they wait to pay for their loot. This captive-audience viewing experience, says Crawford, is “our version of exit through the gift shop.” **AN**

@Deannalisaacs

The Newberry Book Fair is the prime event for book lovers in the Chicago area and beyond. **COURTESY NEWBERRY LIBRARY**





Leaders of Healing to Action demand improvements to CPS's sex ed curriculum to help remedy gender-based violence

ANDREA MICHELSON

Healing to Action's leaders—mostly low-wage workers who've been organizing to address gender-based violence in their communities since 2016—were stunned. Yet the report confirmed many of their own experiences attempting to address issues of sexual and mental health with their children, grandchildren, and other kids in their extended family networks. The combination of taboos around speaking of sexual health in their families or cultures and the lack of transparency and support from CPS left them feeling stuck.

A handful of concerned parents stood up in front of the gathering on Thursday, and took turns speaking about their frustrations with sexual health education. They called on those in the audience to join them in a campaign to pressure CPS.

"The biggest problem we have in our neighborhoods is violence, gender violence specifically," Margarita Miranda, one of Healing to Action's leaders said in Spanish, as an English-language interpreter streamed her words into the headsets of attendees. "We're joining together and want to demand that our voices are heard, so sex ed gets taught in every single school in Chicago." She said neighborhood schools need more counselors and parents need help, both from CPS and community organizations, "so they're prepared to talk to their kids. Explain to them what violence is, what sexual abuse is."

Other attendees seemed frustrated by their own inability to discuss sex and relationships with their kids. "Our parents never talked to us about sexuality," said Esperanza Emiliano, another group leader with three daughters who've gone through CPS schools. "We are here in the U.S., but the customs and traditions in our homes [are different]—we don't speak about sexuality. We're running the risk that our kids are getting an education out on the street, with bad information."

Susan Aarup, a disability rights activist, positioned her wheelchair in a circle with

NEWS

Sexual miseducation

In an era of unprecedented attention to gender violence, Latinx organizers demand CPS address shortcomings.

By MAYA DUKMASOVA

Last Thursday, a small group of people gathered in a sun-drenched storefront on Kedzie Avenue in Irving Park. Brought together by the grassroots group Healing to Action, they came to discuss their mounting discontent about Chicago Public Schools' sexual health education curriculum. Though the event welcomed anyone with kids, grandkids, or other relatives at CPS, and even just interested community

members, no men showed up.

Last year, CPS released an assessment of its sex ed program. Though the district has a curriculum beginning with lessons on good touch/bad touch in kindergarten and continuing through discussions about healthy relationships in 12th grade, by its own measure, CPS is falling short on implementation. In the 2017-2018 school year, the report found, only 76 percent of schools had

the required minimum of two school staff members who'd completed the district's sex ed instructor training—meaning one in four schools didn't. Just 28 percent of schools taught all the required sex ed minutes at all grade levels (300 minutes at every grade level in K-4, 675 minutes each year in 5th-12th grades). Only half of the district's schools send a required note about sex ed instruction to parents every year.

NEWS & POLITICS

Miranda and six others and explained that CPS's sex ed curriculum is neither tailored to diverse learners nor takes the sexual health and sex lives of people with physical or mental disabilities into account. "As if people with disabilities—like it doesn't affect them, or they don't have sex," she said. "The fact that it's a nonissue is an issue." Indeed, the CPS sex ed curriculum guide available online doesn't mention sexual health and sexuality as they pertain to people with disabilities. Meanwhile, district data indicates that at least 14 percent of the students have special education needs.

The current political environment—both at CPS, which has been embroiled in a sexual abuse scandal, and in the wider culture with #MeToo—has created a new urgency for improved education on sexuality, relationships, and consent. Time and again, the women gathered said they wished the schools were better partners to their own efforts to disrupt harmful ways of viewing sex and gender. Some said they haven't been able to find CPS's sex ed materials in Spanish (though the district's students are now nearly 47 percent Latinx and represent the largest demographic group in the schools). Others said they suspected that their kids weren't receiving any sexual health instruction at school. Jennifer, a mom with three kids at a CPS magnet elementary school, said she'd been asking her school's counselor to provide her with the sex ed curriculum so she could reinforce lessons at home, and never received a response. Sarah Rothschild, an education policy researcher with the Chicago Teachers Union and a member of the Tilden Career Community Academy Local School Council, said the school never received a promised social worker after CPS announced a hiring spree last summer.

CPS says it's working to improve its sex ed curriculum. "The district has a robust sexual education curriculum which is currently in the process of being updated to include additional content on consent, gender-based violence, personal safety, dating violence, cyber bullying, and navigating online and social media," district spokeswoman Emily Bolton wrote in an e-mail. She added that the curriculum is already available in both English and Spanish. "Parents can speak with their schools to access a copy. The full curriculum is not available online to the public in any language, but instructors are trained to engage parents and encouraged to share the content if they have any questions or concerns."

Bolton didn't respond to questions about how the district plans to remedy problems of equal access to sex ed that were identified in its own report from last year.

Healing to Action is now gathering data to figure out exactly which schools are lacking sex ed instruction. "Our hunch is that this is probably falling along the lines of income and race," Sheerine Alemzadeh, Healing to Action's cofounder, said after the event. The next steps in community engagement will focus on collecting feedback from students and bringing more men into the conversation. "A lot of our leaders talked about how their kids were either being targeted for or engaging in bullying. They're seeing this kind of masculine behavior as part of the problem that they're trying to use this campaign to address," Alemzadeh said. "If you start talking about gender identity and roles and healthy masculinity and consent and healthy relationships, then hopefully you can prevent the bullying and prevent some of the stuff that's not just sexual harassment or

sexual violence, but some of those toxic attitudes that translate over time into abusive behavior."

The group has already printed red, white, and blue postcards outlining their campaign and demands for CPS: "Right now, sex ed is not equal across all Chicago schools," the card declares on one side. On the other, "We" are introduced as workers from across the city who've experienced gender-based violence. "We believe a lack of meaningful sex ed perpetuated the cycle of poverty and violence in our communities," the card declares. "We demand: A voice to make sure that sex ed is taught in all Chicago Schools; Funding for equal access to sex ed, regardless of zip code; Support for parents to understand sex ed and teach kids about healthy relationships at home." ■

Andrea Michelson contributed reporting to this story.

🐦 @mdoukmas



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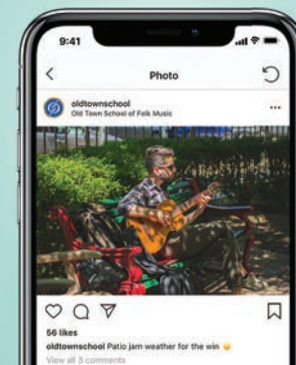
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NEWS

The burden of proof

How immigration court is especially challenging for LGBTQ asylum seekers

By JUSTIN AGRELO

Two things immediately come to Alejandra Aranda's mind when asked about her hometown of Iguala, Mexico, in the north-central state of Guerrero. The first is its scenic nature; how El Tehuehue hill serves as a beautiful backdrop to this city, home to more than 100,000 people. The second is the relentless bullying she experienced there, much of it from those closest to her.

Aranda, 48, is a trans woman, and though she transitioned only after leaving Iguala, she says she always "looked like a girl." Her femininity made her a target for abuse from her peers and family, especially her father, who she says was one of her worst bullies, describing their relationship at the time as "abusive."

Aranda left Mexico in 1990 shortly after graduating from high school. She used her newfound adulthood and the queerphobia she faced in Iguala to fuel her journey north. She set her sights on Los Angeles after her childhood friend, Tania, who is also a trans woman, sent Aranda letters describing the big American city with its vibrant LGBTQ community.

"I came to America for a new life, for the gay community," she says. "We all had dreams to come here. For a lot of people, it was for work, but for me, it was to live my life. My gay life."

Aranda's journey in the 90s mirrors what many LGBTQ migrants experience today. Queer and trans migrants are still forced to leave home for reasons similar to other migrants, but also because of the violence they face as a result of their queer identities. While exact numbers are unavailable due to fears of persecution at home, an estimated 15,000 to 50,000 undocumented transgender immigrants live in the U.S. according to the

"First, I'm Latina, you can tell I'm indigenous, and then undocumented and transgender," Aranda says of how people see her. "After that, many doors are closed."  MICHELLE KANAAR

National Center for Transgender Equality. Nearly 70 countries around the world still criminalize LGBTQ people, with punishments as severe as the death penalty, according to the Human Rights Campaign.

In search of safety, LGBTQ asylum seekers are often met with more violence at the border at the hands of the U.S. immigration system—a system that can be dangerous for all migrants, but especially for queer and trans people. According to a report by the Center for American Progress, LGBTQ migrants make up just .14 percent of people ICE detained in 2017, yet were 12 percent of those who reported sexual abuse. This sexual violence is often perpetrated by the U.S.-employed detention staff as well as other detained migrants.

In May 2018, 37 Democratic congressional representatives published a letter to Kirstjen Nielsen, then the Department of Homeland Security secretary, criticizing ICE for its "disturbing" treatment of LGBTQ migrants. They denounced the agency for placing trans women in detention with cisgender men and asked ICE to release all LGBTQ migrants from custodial detention into safer alternatives like supervised release or placement with hosts or sponsors while cases work their way through the courts.

For Antonio Gutierrez, 30, the violence queer and trans migrants face from the U.S. immigration apparatus speaks to a dark reality where "asking for asylum could also

lead to death." Gutierrez is a member of Organized Communities Against Deportations (OCAD), a grassroots organization that helps protect and empower undocumented people in Chicago.

Gutierrez says that immigration detention is inherently inhumane and dangerous for LGBTQ migrants, pointing to the tragic death of Roxana Hernández, a trans woman from Honduras who died in ICE custody in May 2018. Hernández died just 16 days after entering the U.S. in search of refuge from the violence she faced back home. While in ICE custody, Hernández was denied medical care, and an independent autopsy revealed that she was physically abused while in detention.

Aranda's time in immigration detention as a trans woman underscores that idea. Shortly after graduating high school, she tried to get a student visa through the U.S. embassy in Mexico, but was denied when she couldn't provide all of the necessary paperwork. She and her sister Columba then hired a coyote who helped get them into the U.S. They were detained and deported three times before successfully making it across through Tijuana.

While in detention Aranda was forced to present as masculine and feared discrimination and violence from those around her. Columba knew she was queer and helped protect her on their journey, she says. However, the sisters were separated each time they were detained. Columba would be placed

with the women and Aranda with the men. Agents never asked how she identified, and she didn't think to tell them. Keeping her gender identity a secret became a tool for survival—but it couldn't fully shield her from the trauma she experienced in detention.

The room in the detention center had a toilet that required the men to use it in front of one another. Aranda felt so vulnerable and uncomfortable in the space she refused to go to the restroom. There were no beds, so everyone had to sleep on the ground. Aranda says the agents treated them like animals, often using excessive force and speaking disrespectfully, with no regard for their humanity.

"It was something very traumatic for me," she says about the three nights she spent in detention. "It's something that I will never forget."

The oppression and discrimination migrants face navigating the U.S. immigration system don't just occur in detention. Bindhu Vijayan has been an immigration lawyer for over ten years. She is currently the director of immigrant empowerment and activism at Community Activism Law Alliance (CALA), a Chicago-based organization that offers legal services to marginalized communities. Vijayan says there are a plethora of ways the immigration court system is challenging for LGBTQ asylum seekers.

In the U.S., a person can seek asylum ➔



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in several ways. One of the more common is through a port of entry. This is where an immigrant presents themselves at an official station, then undergoes an interview meant to establish whether they have “credible fear” of harm in their home countries. After that they are usually released and allowed to live in the U.S. until their time in front of an immigration judge—though this process has been recently upended by the Trump administration’s “Remain in Mexico” policy.

To be granted asylum, someone must prove that they are fleeing persecution in their home country and that this persecution is based on race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in what is called a “particular social group.” LGBTQ people have been considered members of the “particular social group” category since 1994. So in order for LGBTQ migrants to be granted asylum, they must prove to an immigration judge that they are queer and/or trans.

Vijayan sees this material proof to be the

most significant hurdle queer and trans migrants face while navigating the immigration court system because the burden of proof is so high. “What is this proof?” she asks. “You’re coming from a country where you maybe never disclosed to anyone [that you identify as LGBTQ] or you didn’t belong to any particular organization.”

Vijayan also sees the methods many courts use to determine if a person is LGBTQ or not as highly problematic because they often rely on stereotypes and cultural biases. She says migrants are forced to reveal private and intimate details about their lives to meet the burden of proof—from the moment they first realized they were queer and/or trans to how many partners they’ve had.

An individual judge’s cultural biases have a considerable impact on whether or not an LGBTQ migrant will be granted asylum. If a migrant does not “fit the bill” for what a specific adjudicator believes a queer or trans person looks like, Vijayan says, they will likely be denied asylum and deported back to the violence they’ve fled. Vijayan also notes that

many LGBTQ migrants may not even reveal their queerness to a judge due to fear of continued discrimination.

“Depending on your country of origin, you may have corrupt judges, corrupt police, [and] just general violence, discrimination, and harassment,” she says. “You may not necessarily want to speak to this intimidating, uniformed customs and border patrol agent and disclose ‘by the way, this is what my identity is.’”

For Aranda, the intimidation and fear she felt in the presence of Border Patrol is something that has stayed with her nearly three decades later. “You saw their power,” she says. “It’s like a movie, to tell you the truth.”

Aranda now lives on Chicago’s north side, and CALA is helping her apply for asylum—something she didn’t know she qualified for until recently. Like many asylum seekers before her, she will also have to meet a high burden of proof in order to be granted refuge in immigration court.

She speaks fondly of the freedom she says she gained in Los Angeles, allowing her to be

herself. Navigating the U.S. as a trans woman of color and an immigrant has led to its own specific set of challenges, though—most recently, getting her name changed in her job’s computer system. The cash register at work used to print receipts with the name she was given at birth, which had placed her in many awkward and sometimes unsafe situations. Now, she feels safer because it prints her last name instead.

Even with all of these challenges, Aranda’s focus isn’t on what she’s lost or the pain she’s experienced. It’s on the life she’s been able to build for herself. A queer life.

“With all the discrimination and everything I’ve lived through,” she says, “I’m a super person now.” 

Editor’s note: Alejandra Aranda’s interview was translated from Spanish to English by Ashley Reyes.

This story was reported as a part of 90 Days, 90 Voices’ Asylum City series on immigration and sanctuary in Chicago.



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FOOD & DRINK



RESTAURANT REVIEW

Whither the gator dog at Doggone's?

A descendant of a New Orleans minichain surfaces in Logan Square.

By MIKE SULA

Clockwise from front: Nola Dog, Swamp Dog, Murray Dog, Louisiana Smoke Dog ■ ALEXANDER GOULETAS

Last month, on the day Chance the Snapper went MIA, I was eating an alligator sausage on a toasted bun squirted with guacamole and sprinkled with pico de gallo. This was the Swamp Dog served at Doggone's Chicago, a new sausage shop with Louisiana DNA that opened a month and a half before people started spotting the alligator in the Humboldt Park Lagoon. The sausage stayed in the back of my mind for two long days when nobody reported seeing the wayward reptile, a mental placeholder reminding me that misadventures can occur when you're alone and far from home.

Doggone's was introduced to Logan Square in late May by one Skip Murray, a sausage impresario who spent a few decades in the UK introducing Brits to American hot dog culture before opening a small gourmet sausage shop in New Orleans—a city with its own proudly entrenched hot dog traditions—and garnering cultlike adherents the way Hot Doug's once did here.

Going forward, it will forever be the fate of each sausage disruptor who hangs a shingle in Chicago to be compared, for better or worse, to Doug Sohn, who steadfastly refused to expand. And while he's had his imitators locally (Franks 'N' Dawgs, Hot "G" Dog), none ever seemed to capture the magic.

Like Hot Doug's, Murray's Dat Dog featured top-loaded encased meats ground from a variety of animals that so enthralled the Crescent City that adherents lined up and waited for them. Dat Dog multiplied itself, opening several Louisiana locations and one in Texas ➔

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before Murray stepped away and started eyeing Logan Square.

Last month while the lagoon baked, the climate in Doggone's long, narrow corner space felt somewhat subtropical itself, as sausages as vividly bedecked as the flag-draped ceiling were handed over the counter in checkered baskets, smothered in sauces and streaked with condiments.

The Nola Dog, positioned as a signature, is a crayfish sausage hidden under a surge of etouffee with diced tomato and onion and zig-zags of mustard and sour cream. Somewhere there's a sausage beneath. Altogether, it's a balanced if messy composition that swells the boundary of its bun, but it's the richness of the smother that takes up most of the attention.

Other sausages are just as assertively though not as abundantly dressed, which highlights the overcapacity of the buns, too large for what they carry. Flaws in the sausages themselves seem to stand out even more. Nearly each one I tried was visibly reduced, wrinkled and withdrawn, any former snappiness reduced to a leathery crackle, as if they'd basked in the sun too long.

The Louisiana Smoked Dog features wizened tips of smoked beef and sausage peeking out from under lashings of mustard, ketchup (*Quick! Call 911!*), cheese, and tomatoes. The Murray Dog is a pork sausage made with Guinness and covered in sweet blackberry sauce and creole mustard, diced onion and bacon, and unmelted, shredded cheddar. A special duck sausage featured much of the same.

One does have choices. There are some two dozen toppings to customize any sausage, including three different vegan options and a "C-Dog"—actually battered and baked cod on a bun.

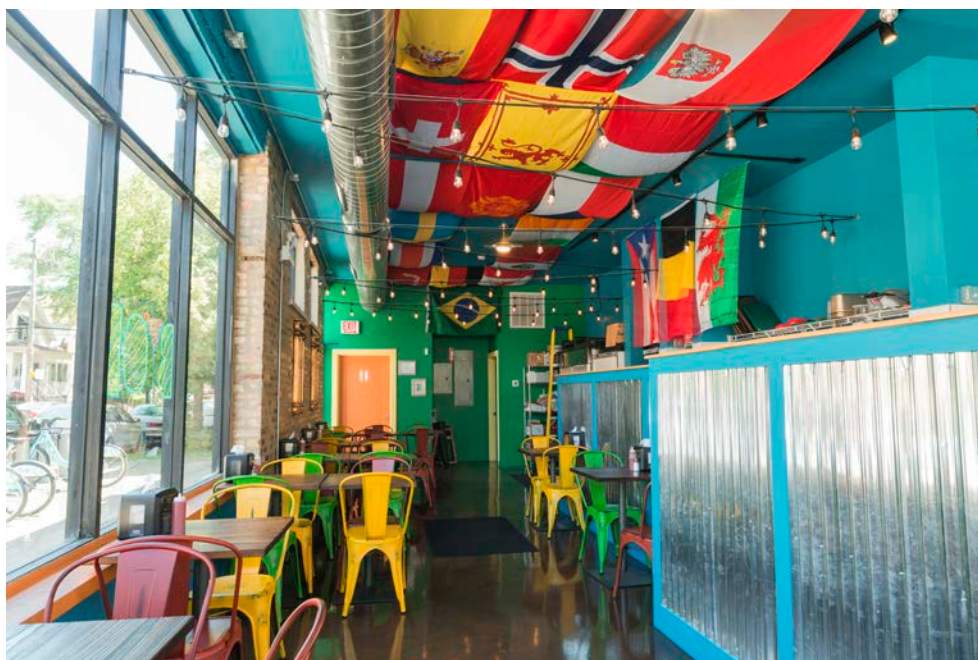
There's no choice about fries, which are also baked, not fried. You can pretend they're not by ordering them topped with etouffee; chili and cheese; bacon, cheddar, and ranch; or an onslaught of thick andouille sauce, chunky with sausage and loaded with its own savory burn—one thing I tried at Doggone's that, along with the etouffee, could stand on its own, maybe in a bowl with a spoon.

Chance the Snapper stuck his head above the water two days after I ate Doggone's Swamp Dog, and as we know, he's since been retired to Florida. It's a bittersweet ending for all of us who want—but know we can't keep—an alligator, an animal, no matter what form it takes, that deserves better treatment. 

 @MikeSula

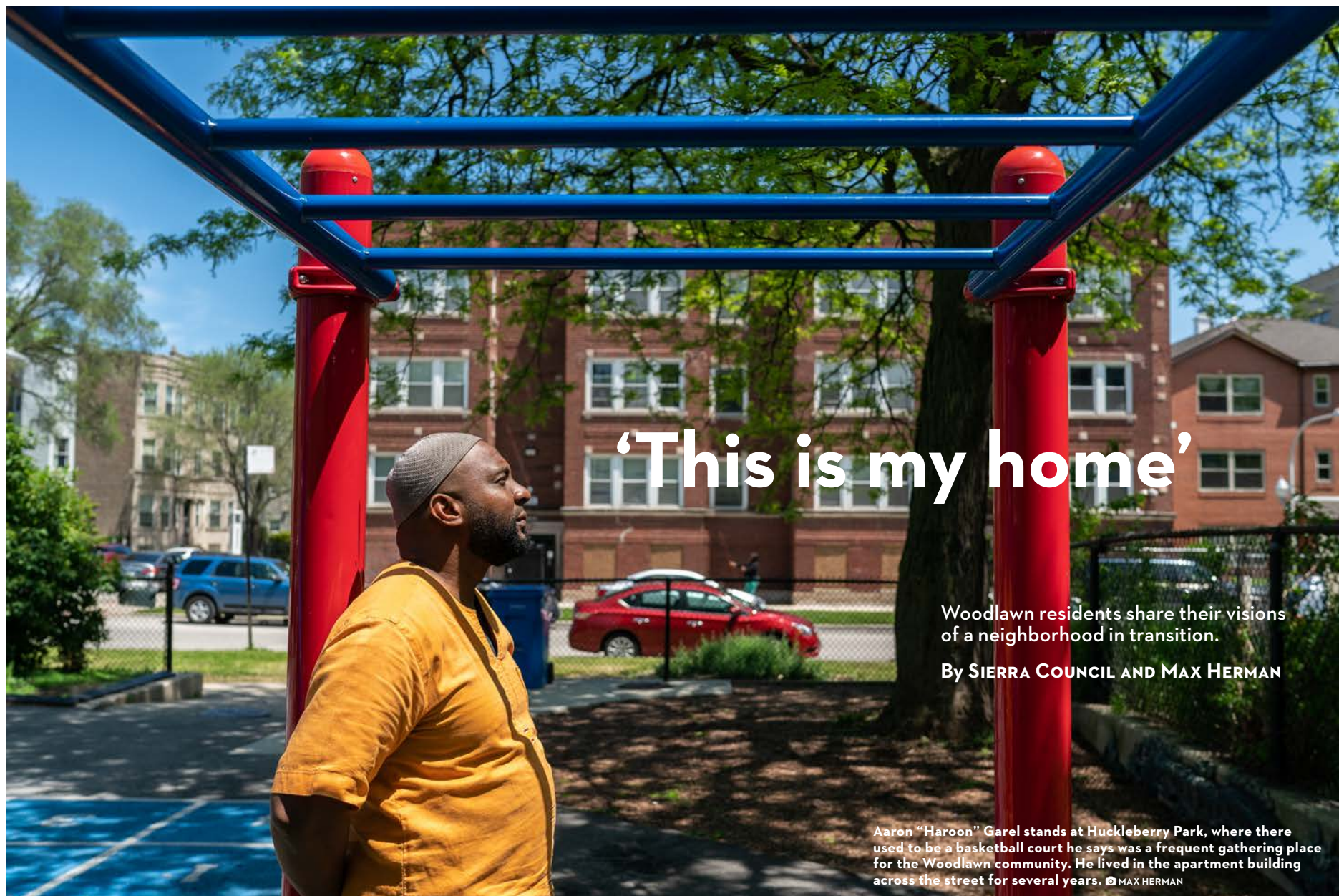


Andouille sauce fries  ALEXANDER GOULETAS



Doggone's long, narrow space in Logan Square can at times feel subtropical.

 ALEXANDER GOULETAS



‘This is my home’

Woodlawn residents share their visions of a neighborhood in transition.

By SIERRA COUNCIL AND MAX HERMAN

Aaron “Haroon” Garel stands at Huckleberry Park, where there used to be a basketball court he says was a frequent gathering place for the Woodlawn community. He lived in the apartment building across the street for several years. © MAX HERMAN

Aaron “Haroon” Garel, 39, recounts fond memories of growing up in his vibrant south-side neighborhood, Woodlawn, during the 1980s. Block club parties were “on and poppin,’” treating neighborhood children to an abundance of candy and a free petting zoo. Stores and restaurants lined 63rd Street, and at the corner of Kimbark Avenue, the original three-story branch of the neighborhood public library doubled as a community center and theater that held talent shows and dance practices.

“Woodlawn was the place to be,” says Garel.

Longtime residents of Woodlawn characterize the community they remember as family oriented, a neighborhood where “everybody knew everybody.”

“It felt familiar and it felt homey,” says Jazmyn Taylor, 26. Taylor spent her childhood

in Woodlawn before her parents moved to the suburbs during her teenage years. She returned to the neighborhood as an adult. “It felt like I was walking in a space where people saw me and saw that I belonged there. And they knew that I was a part of the fabric.” Woodlawn runs from the lake west to King Drive, and from 60th Street south to 67th. The neighborhood contains a portion of the University of Chicago campus and Jackson Park, future site of the Obama Presidential Center (OPC).

Neighborhood landmarks that residents like Taylor and Garel fondly recall, including basketball courts and family-owned grocery stores, are now gone.

During the 1990s and 2000s, the neighborhood experienced significant population and infrastructure loss. Residents attribute the decline to a rise in drugs, crime, racial tension, and a lack of follow-through on promised ➔



Longtime Woodlawn businesses along 63rd, just east of Cottage Grove © MAX HERMAN



Sara Pitcher sits on the balcony of her co-op apartment at Woodlawn and 61st with University of Chicago construction dominating her view to the north. Pitcher is the last original resident of these apartments, cofounded and rehabbed by her late husband, Reverend Al Pitcher, and the Covenant Community of University Church more than 40 years ago. MAX HERMAN

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redevelopment. The negative stigma that clouded the neighborhood's reputation delayed any potential population gains, leaving behind numerous vacant lots and minimal investment.

Today, though, Woodlawn has become an attractive location for those looking to capitalize on these vacancies. In a January 2017 *Curbed Chicago* article, Woodlawn was named 2016 Neighborhood of the Year.

Just this year, new developments have sprung up across the neighborhood, including

a 48,000-square-foot Jewel-Osco grocery store and new homes selling for more than \$700,000. In the near future Woodlawn will see the arrival of a mixed-use medical center, massive University of Chicago dorms, and the renovation of a church into a community theater.

Much of the change is institutionally influenced. In 1964, the University of Chicago agreed not to develop beyond 61st Street, but in recent years it has expanded southward, shifting racial and economic demographics.

Sara Pitcher has lived in Woodlawn for more than 40 years, ever since her late husband,



Kids in the Summer Blast program at Sunshine Gospel Ministries on 61st Street gather around team leader Jeremiah Holmes, in character as "Beach Kid Brandon." Holmes grew up coming to Sunshine's after-school programs and now is on staff at this organization in West Woodlawn. MAX HERMAN

Reverend Al Pitcher, opened the Covenant Community of University Church in an apartment complex at the corner of 61st and Woodlawn. From her rooftop, she can see the towering dormitories being built by the University of Chicago, blocking the view she once had of the Midway Plaisance Park.

"I don't necessarily consider them a great neighbor," says Pitcher, who has helped cultivate an intentionally integrated community that holds regular resident meetings and potlucks where decisions are made collectively.

The Apostolic Church of God, a megachurch led by Pastor Byron Brazier that owns several properties in the neighborhood, was integral in the removal of a portion of the CTA Green Line in 1997, as reported by J.W. Mason in the *Reader*. The transit line once ran all the way to Stony Island Avenue above an assortment of

small businesses and community centers.

"They got those tracks tore down and built those houses [east of Woodlawn Avenue], and that was the end of any shopping or commercial development up and down 63rd," says Garel. "It became a desert."

The OPC, which is cleared to be built in Jackson Park, is another large institution that has many residents worried about their future in a historically affordable neighborhood.

"It's going to definitely change the community—raise the economic base of who can afford to live here. And when you think about all that, you can love Obama . . . but that's not enough to make what it's definitely going to change worth it for me," says Taylor.

These changes have pushed many residents to action—sparking the launch of community organization, IWoodlawn, and prompting ➔



Longtime Woodlawn resident and jazz enthusiast Abdul Karim stands on the grounds where the Pershing Hotel and Budland nightclub used to be at Cottage Grove and 64th. Karim recalls the days in the 1960s when he would soak in the sounds of local and out-of-town jazz players in numerous clubs along Cottage Grove. MAX HERMAN

“It may be close to the Obama Presidential Center, but I want it to be a beacon of light. Like a corridor where young people and elderly can travel from Englewood, South Shore, or Woodlawn, and it becomes a center for learning, enjoyment, and appreciating nature.”

- Artist William Hill on the botanic garden he helped create next to Hyde Park Academy at 63rd and Stony Island.

William Hill  MAX HERMAN



Jazmyn Taylor stands in Jackson Park, where she grew up visiting to ride bikes and barbecue with her family. The track seen behind her, once used by her grandmother, is slated to be relocated farther south once the Obama Presidential Center is complete.  MAX HERMAN

A group with the Army Corps of Engineers sets a prescribed burn in Jackson Park on April 16, 2019, just east of the Obama Presidential Center construction site. This four-year restoration project aims to bring back native species like the Michigan lily and the butterfly weed that would be specifically in sight of the OPC specifically.  MAX HERMAN

At the botanic garden he helped create, William Hill gets assistance moving mulch from Hyde Park Academy student Darius Triplett as part of a day of volunteer work for seniors at the high school on April 22, 2019.  MAX HERMAN

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a cohort that supports a community benefits agreement surrounding the OPC.

The preservation of a family-oriented culture remains a concern.

“I don’t want the family aspect and the people here to change. That’s what makes Woodlawn what it is,” says Jeremiah Holmes, 22, whose childhood apartment at 61st and Cottage Grove has now been replaced by the Jewel-Osco.

However, some residents see the neighborhood change as a positive sign.

“Look, nothing stays the same,” says Abdul Karim, 78, whose family moved to Woodlawn from Mississippi in 1957. “Either you can be a part of the progress or a part of the regress. . . . Gentrification can go both ways. Either you are going to control your area or you are going to let someone do it to you.”

Little remains from many longtime residents’ memories of the community. The jazz clubs on Cottage Grove from Karim’s youth have been demolished, local store favorites on 63rd are gone, and the historic Washington Park National Bank will soon become a dual office-retail center. Regardless, many residents express a commitment to being included in Woodlawn’s transition and a refusal to succumb to the wave of displacement impacting gentrifying communities across the city.

William Hill does so by turning vacant space into public community gardens. He is often found developing one at the intersection of 63rd and Stony Island, next to the Hyde Park Academy High School, which he attended more than 50 years ago.

“It may be close to the Obama Presidential Center, but I want it to be a beacon of light,” says Hill. “A corridor where young people and elderly can travel from Englewood, South Shore, or Woodlawn, and it becomes a center for learning, enjoyment, and appreciating nature.”

These residents have their own ideas for the community and what they hope to see preserved. Most importantly, they share why they choose to stay.

“This is my home,” says Pitcher. “I can’t imagine living anywhere else.” 

 **Sierra_Alyse**
 **MaxHermanPhoto**

This story was produced with support from City Bureau, a civic journalism lab based in Woodlawn. If you are a longtime Woodlawn resident who wants to share your ideas and vision for the neighborhood, learn more about how you can get involved at citybureau.org/woodlawn.

ARTS & CULTURE



Lookbook photos from Hooligan Brand.
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FASHION

We do fashion different here

The Museum of Streetwear enshrines young Chicago designers (for a weekend).

By **MATT HARVEY**

“Streetwear in Chicago” evokes such names as Leaders 1354, Jugernaut, Joe Freshgoods of Fat Tiger Workshop, and Virgil Abloh. These brands and individuals carry the torch internationally for Chicago streetwear, but while the titans are making their waves, there is a bubbling undercurrent of designers whose creative work brings definition to the city’s fashion scene. It is in that undercurrent that Amanda Harth, founder of the online fashion resource Runwayaddicts, stumbled upon the inspiration for the Museum of Streetwear.

The Museum of Streetwear, a two-day pop-up in East Garfield Park, is a first-of-its-kind exhibition that aims to bring attention to a Chicago streetwear scene that is teeming with creative designs and ideas. “I’ve always been drawn more towards exhibitions and presentations as opposed to traditional runway shows,” Harth says. “I don’t think a [fashion] market here needs runway shows or a fashion week. They need something that allows them to interact and lets them explore things.” In

comparison to other major fashion markets, Harth believes that Chicago is unique in that way. “[Chicago’s] a much more practical market,” she says. “Chicago lacks a lot of glamour, and that’s not a bad thing. Here it’s like, ‘We’ve got work to do,’ so it requires something more casual.”

That need for “something more casual” is why streetwear thrives in Chicago. Originally an outgrowth of the NYC hip-hop and LA skateboarding subcultures in the mid-70s, streetwear is characterized by an emphasis on comfort over formality, an unbuttoned look that combines baggy clothing; graphic tees with creative designs, characters, and logos; sturdy sneakers; and a rejection of the old-guard fashion brands. “Streetwear brands in a traditional sense are independent ones, like Leaders and Fat Tiger,” says Harth. “Early on, brands like Nike and Adidas were key in the foundation of streetwear as well.” Now the movement also includes the young Chicago designers who will be featured in the Museum of Streetwear, such as We All We Got, PerryCo Shoes, and Little High, Little Low.



Harth is a native of the Pullman neighborhood. Her desire to pursue fashion led her to the Illinois Institute of Art; she graduated in 2010. “I was trying to start my own brand and I realized I didn’t really know how to run a business,” she says. “I began interning, first with my uncle, who is a designer.” Harth’s uncle, Elhadji “Haj” Gueye, a renowned tailor and owner of Maison de Haj, a tailor shop located near the corner of Van Buren and Michigan, has designed suits for Bernie Mac as well as for TV shows and films shot in Chicago. “I went back to working in the retail business, learning hands on how to market, how to promote, how to do payroll, etc. I became a sponge around people in the branding world of, like, Leo Burnett.”

Realizing she was sitting on a mountain of untapped knowledge about the fashion industry, Harth started Runwayaddicts in 2012. “First it was a platform for independent and emerging designers to promote their work,” she says. “Then we were very events focused for about a year. Now we’re a fashion media company created for designers to use as a

THE MUSEUM OF STREETWEAR

Sat 7/27-Sun 7/28, 11 AM-6 PM, Lab on Lake,
3450 W. Lake, runwayaddicts.co, \$20-\$25 day
pass, \$65-\$110 VIP weekend all-access pass.

ARTS & CULTURE



Hand dyed and distressed jackets by
Chicago designer Ron Louis

DEREK MACHAK / @USUALLYTAKINGPHOTOS

resource to get connected with the resources that they need to thrive. [It's] pretty much something that I felt like would've helped me when I tried to start my own brand."

The idea for a museum dedicated to streetwear came in a most unlikely way, as Harth tells it: in April she was nearing the end of a self-expression and leadership course at the Landmark Forum—a personal and professional growth, training, and development program—and she was required to come up with a final community project. "We had to come up with projects by the end of the day for this program, and I just made it up on the spot. Everyone thought it sounded cool, and I was just like, 'All right, we'll see how cool it really is,'" she says. "I'm creating this with the goal of connecting communities that are fashion focused and creatively focused in Chicago. I want us to come together to talk about building something here. For this weekend, I want to get as many people in fashion in one space to start that conversation."

That includes a panel about owning your own business featuring Diego Ross of Leaders

1354, and a discussion on women in streetwear led by blogger Taylor Justin and featuring Brittney Perry of the creative agency and streetwear project Her Notoriety.

Rico Acoff Jr. is one of the 13 featured designers Harth invited to be a voice in this conversation. Acoff is the founder of Hooligan Brand, a streetwear company he started in 2015. "I was really in need of a job around the time I started in fashion, and I couldn't find one," he says. "Then my mother told me, 'If you can't find a job then make one.'" Acoff had been an avid consumer of local streetwear brands. "Starting a clothing brand was a way to express my creativity and my love for streetwear," he says.

Acoff sees the Museum of Streetwear as an opportunity for budding designers to become more connected. "It's building a light for people that are up-and-coming in this industry," Acoff says. "We'll get to meet and communicate and share ideas within this community. This kind of thing is fundamental for the growth of the creative community."

With ComplexCon in Chicago this year,

hometown designers have been invited to collaborate with nationally recognized brands and create capsules for the occasion—like Joe Freshgoods teaming up with west-coast streetwear brand the Hundreds. Acoff and Harth both expressed major concern for what will happen to this sudden creative boom in the wake of ComplexCon. "I call it the 'Wakanda Effect,'" Harth says. "When people first saw *Black Panther*, everyone wanted to go out and do amazing things for their community, then two weeks after they were just back to their same old ways. All of these people are coming from around the world to see [ComplexCon], but what happens when they leave?"

But Ron Louis, a designer and founder of Phera brand and another featured artist in the Museum of Streetwear, sees both events as just symptoms of a positive growth in the creative community. "I think it's more so a reflection of what we've already been doing here in the city for years," he says. "I think that events like the Museum of Streetwear and ComplexCon are going to inspire creatives to go harder."

Since April, Harth and her team have been busy connecting the dots to make the Museum of Streetwear come together as quickly as possible: booking a venue, getting sponsors, and connecting with brands she hoped to feature. "Now it's all about sharing this with as many people as possible," she says. "With this event, I just feel like Runwayaddicts is doing what it's supposed to be doing."

A few years down the line Harth hopes to build a permanent space on the south side that's dedicated to streetwear, one that won't just include an interactive museum but also work spaces for designers to create in. For now, though, the Museum of Streetwear is all about building the community up. "Fashion is a trillion-dollar industry, and the fact that Chicago hasn't been able to capitalize on it is ridiculous. Designers are constantly overlooked here, and they feel like they have to leave to become successful," she says. "I just really want for people in Chicago to start investing in the designers that they have here."

@Matthemajor

“SEAN MASTERSON’S TIMELESS MAGIC”
Through 10/2: Wed 7:30 PM, Chicago Magic Lounge, 5050 N. Clark, 312-366-4500, chicagomagiclounge.com, \$35 main floor, \$45 front row, 21+ (16+ to ticketed shows with a legal guardian).



Henry V TOM MCGRATH

RR HENRY V
Through 8/18:
Wed-Sun 8:15 PM, First Folio Theatre, Mayslake Peabody Estate, 1717 31st St., Oak Brook, 630-986-8067, firstfolio.org, \$34-\$44, \$29-\$39 students and seniors, \$10 kids 14 and under.

REVIEW

The king stays the king

Diana Coates’s commanding performance dominates First Folio’s *Henry V*.

By JACK HELBIG

Shakespeare’s *Henry V* is very much a play of words not action, this despite being a play about war (specifically Henry V’s battles in France during the Hundred Years’ War, including England’s remarkable victory in the Battle of Agincourt). Yes, the play includes a couple of fight scenes. And a good designer with a decent budget could wow an audience with an array of battle uniforms and sumptuous court costumes. (This does not happen in this production; Stefanie Johnsen’s costumes are serviceable but not amazing.) But really, the success of *Henry V* hinges on whether you have an ensemble that knows how to deliver the Bard’s words with confidence and power.

In this department, First Folio’s current revival, directed by Hayley Rice, is a mixed bag. Some of Rice’s actors deliver their lines tolerably well, but others only get the sound of the words, not the feeling behind them. And others mar their delivery with awful attempts at accents (particularly French accents so bad they would make Pepé Le Pew blush).

It doesn’t help that Rice complicates her production with an annoying framing de-

vice: Rice takes the character of Chorus (who introduces each act of the play) and turns her into a docent in modern-day England leading a gaggle of gawking tourists through “significant” historical sites. This concept breaks up the flow of the story, and transforms Shakespeare’s intentionally elevated language, meant to tell us we are watching important events in the life of Henry V and England (it is not for nothing that Derek Jacobi played Chorus in Kenneth Branagh’s 1989 movie version of this play), into mere tour-guide chatter. I blame Rice’s concept for Lydia Berger Gray’s uninspired delivery of lines that should stir the blood and set the stage for some of the most important moments in Henry’s reign.

None of these flaws really matter, though, because at the center of the production is Diana Coates, an actor so strong and so perfectly cast as Henry that she makes up for the production’s missteps. From the moment she enters the play, she dominates, standing with regal bearing, stalking the stage like a true warrior-king, confident of her strength, always poised for action. And when she speaks, she reveals in every word and pause the full power and poetry in Shakespeare’s lines. This is the second time Coates has played Henry; she was the lead in a version of the play performed by Babes with Blades in 2017 (also directed by Rice), and I hope it is not her last. But it is my greater hope that some wise director will cast her in another Shakespeare play, and another, and another. She’d be a great Hamlet. She would kill as Macbeth. And Lear. Oh, I would pay good money to see her do Lear.

REVIEW

Magical mystery tour

“Sean Masterson’s Timeless Magic” sets the stage for the Chicago Magic Lounge.

By CATEY SULLIVAN

You’ve heard of going through the looking glass? The Chicago Magic Lounge takes you through the laundromat. That’s where you’re headed if you seek the wonders of prestidigitation in store behind the bank of washer-dryers stacked floor to ceiling in the Uptown venue. As cover-ups go, it’s not quite as convincing as the industrial dry-cleaning machinery fronting the meth lab in *Breaking Bad*. But it’s a good introduction to the surprises in store.

The Magic Lounge launched in 2018 as a multistage temple to the old-school charmers of the pre-David Copperfield world, conjurers such as Matt Schulien, who helped make Chicago a hotbed of up-close magic. In Magic Lounge lore, Schulien led the charge to take magic “from the stage to the spectator’s table.”

That’s certainly the aesthetic at the Magic Lounge, where customers are asked to question reality before they lay eyes on so much as a card trick: some of those washer-dryer units are not like the others. Find the secret door among them, and you’ll soon be in a surprisingly spacious 34-guest-capacity bar steeped in art deco elegance, where bartenders serve craft cocktails with names such as “How Houdini Died” and “Smoke and Mirrors.” Beyond the bar, there’s a library where packs of cards float in midair and ancient, priceless tomes on the history and practice of magic sit like sacred idols in lighted glass cases.

And beyond those cases, “Sean Masterson’s Timeless Magic” headlines the lounge’s 120-seat Harry Blackstone Cabaret through October 2. (Additional acts play the 43-seat 654 Club.) Masterson’s show is rooted in local history—specifically, the 1893 Columbian

Exposition, aka the Chicago World’s Fair. Masterson’s narrative through line involves a mysterious coin and his attempt to find its origin. The search is a gentle, mostly fascinating crash course in late-19th-century magicians, especially those known to have worked the 1893 fair.

Masterson’s illusions are more intriguing than eye-popping. Scarves fly and float like tiny birds; playing cards, silver coins, and little round balls vanish and materialize via what seem like telekinesis and telepathy; a ghost puppet tells hilariously awful jokes. Masterson is a genial host, accompanying his sleight of hand with tales of Houdini and Blackstone, Howard Thurston, and “Chung Ling Soo”—the last a white man who donned “yellowface” in order to beguile audiences with stereotypical exoticism.

Masterson isn’t the only magician at work in the lounge. Before he takes the stage, an in-house company of ten wandering conjurers works the tables. While overwhelmingly male—there’s one woman among them—the company of magicians seems to be consciously avoiding the most hackneyed clichés of magic’s historically macho world: no scantily clad female assistants are sawed in half, levitated, or disappeared.

It’s all about the eye contact in the lounge. It’s a place where the artists make you believe (or at least want to believe) in magic. Come skeptical, and you’ll leave at least considering the possibility of the impossible.

@CateySullivan



TITI AYANGADE

OPENING

Dinosaur Durang

Eclipse Theatre Company's cast can't save this 80s relic.

Eclipse Theatre Company presents Christopher Durang's badly dated 1981 farce about a mismatched couple's therapy-aided quest for love. When Prudence (Devi Reisenfeld) answers Bruce's (Nick Freed) personals ad, they meet at a nondescript restaurant and have an awkward first date, highlighted by a volley of inappropriate comments back and forth. She storms out hoping never to see him again. But neither she, nor the audience, will be so lucky. Bruce's amnesiac therapist, Charlotte (Lynne Baker), convinces him to place another ad. However, because of her condition, the advice is actually meant for another patient. Prudence's shrink, Stuart (Joe McCauley), doesn't bother counseling her at all, but just wants to get back into her pants. She improbably continues to come to him after their disastrous affair. This is all played for laughs, though it's never clear to what end. Bruce's live-in lover Bob (Siddhartha Rajan) is understandably upset about Bruce's new romance. Bob's reaction is the only aspect of Durang's play that rings true. Every other character is a collection of ticks rather than an actual human being. From the appropriately hideous early 80s decor to the cringeworthy epithets that rain down throughout, there's a grotesque incongruousness to this play. Perhaps when it debuted,



Ghost Quartet

MICHAEL BROSILOW

the way it tweaks sexual mores might've seemed daring, but in 2019 it comes off as ugly and unnecessary. The uniformly talented cast does its level best to breathe life into this dinosaur, but some species are better relegated to the boneyard. Rachel Lambert directed. —**DMITRY SAMAROV** [BEYOND THERAPY Through 8/18: Thu-Sat 7:30 PM, Sun 2 PM, Athenaeum Theatre, 2936 N. Southport, 773-935-6875, \[eclipsetheatre.com\]\(#\), \\$30, \\$20 students and seniors.](#)

RR

Songs in the key of loss

Ghost Quartet takes four friends on a shape-shifting journey through time and music.

Black Button Eyes Productions presents the Chicago premiere of Dave Malloy's 2014 song cycle, which gleefully compels four friends to shape-shift through centuries of haunted evocations of love, longing, loss,

and friendship. In a brisk 90 minutes presenting more than 24 numbers introduced as tracks on four "sides" (like a double LP), this utterly absorbing show (directed by Ed Rutherford) manages to name-check Edgar Allan Poe, Thelonious Monk, Little Red Riding Hood, the Arabian Nights, and untold other poetics of the human condition while hardly breaking a sweat. Amanda Raquel Martinez and Rachel Guth ably carry most of the lead vocal duties, while T.J. Anderson and Alex Ellsworth hold their own on a variety of instruments and provide complementary backup singing. But all four performers are constantly required to shift gears without breaking the momentum of the songs, which pile up at a dizzying clip. It's an often astonishing tight-rope walk that manages to be heartfelt, hilarious, and deceptively resonant for our overstimulated ADD age. The combination of Jeremy Hollis's curio-shop set and G. "Max" Maxin IV's cheeky, often charmingly outdated video projections lend an odd retro/out-of-time backdrop, but it would all fall flat if Malloy's songs didn't measure up. Fortunately, his pastiches of jazz, folk, and show tunes perfectly meld the tones and textures that give these four time-skipping apparitions flight. You don't have to believe in ghosts to be utterly moved by their plight, and a half dozen of the catchier refrains will haunt even the most jaded materialist long after they've left the theater. —**DMITRY SAMAROV** [GHOST QUARTET Through 8/17: Thu-Sat 7:30 PM, Sun 2 PM, Stage 773, 1225 W. Belmont, 773-327-5252, \[blackbuttoneyes.com\]\(#\), \\$30.](#) ➔

— COMING —

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THEATER

→ RR Four-course circus Teatro ZinZanni serves Love, Chaos & Dinner

Teatro ZinZanni's Chicago premiere of *Love, Chaos & Dinner* is a delightfully schizophrenic extravaganza. Occupying an entire floor of the Cambria Hotel with a giant big-top tent that glitters with mirrors and chandeliers, this show is three hours of madcap high jinks and stunning feats of awe. Guests are guided through the pandemonium by two cohosts. Cabaret star Rizo (aka Amelia Zirin-Brown), a Lady Gagaesque diva with a big voice and commanding presence, enters on the shoulders of men, draped in marabou, and treats the audience to an audacious cover of Jimi Hendrix's "Little Wing." Frank Ferrante is Caesar the Chef, a master improviser who pokes fun at the audience with frenetic character work, corny jokes, and some old-school pop cultural references, from Redd Foxx to Mary Tyler Moore.

The sizzling and versatile band, headed by musical director Hans Teuber, leads the cast through a songbook that includes classic cabaret songs like "Don't Touch My Tomatoes" and modern hits. This true variety show includes outstanding acts of opera, juggling, comedy, and multiple astounding trapeze and tumbling features, including one jaw-dropping act by Duo Rose that I can only describe as a death-defying sexy aerial dance—some of the best work you'll see outside of Cirque du Soleil.

Comedy by Joe De Paul and Tim Tyler keeps the mood mirthful and goofy, and even the four-course dinner (created by Debbie Sharpe of the Goddess and Grocer) becomes part of the show, served by a cast of roving comedians who deliver tableside comedy. Stay home if you don't like fun. As for me, I would go a second time. —**SHERI FLANDERS** **LOVE, CHAOS & DINNER** Through 9/29: Wed-Fri 7 PM, Sat-Sun noon and 7 PM, Hotel Cambria, 32 W. Randolph, 312-488-0900, zinzanni.com, \$99-\$189 (includes a four-course meal).

Somewhere in time

Murky chronology lowers the stakes in *Now and Then*.

Three versions of lovers Daniel and Greg—in their 20s, 30s, and "50s and older"—occupy the stage in this original musical by Dennis Manning (songs) and Ronnie Larsen (book). The pair meet in college, maybe around 2000, a fact gleaned from tossed-in pop culture references: John Denver's dead, Beyoncé is famous. Thus the oldest iteration of the couple, who've weathered 40-plus years, is living in the 2040s at the earliest, which here looks identical to the present day. More puzzling, Greg mentions the toy he most wanted as a boy—an Easy-Bake Oven—was a "crazy new thing" when he was 12. It was brought to market in 1963.

Perhaps it's nitpicking to dwell on the show's muddled chronology when its creators want audiences to focus on the trials, tribulations, and sassyish banter of a long-term gay relationship. But given that the play's central conceit puts past, present, and future simultaneously onstage for most of the show, the time line is in essence its spine. More importantly, the creators give us little else to mull on for two hours, as nothing much develops in the men's relationship except intermittent dustups resolved by singing a love song or three. And since the oldest version of the couple has settled into relative comfort and contentment, little is at stake along the way.

Director Larsen's staging for Now & Then Productions is earnest and candid but feels underprepared, and the multiple Gregs and Daniels lack discernible chemistry. —**JUSTIN HAYFORD** **NOW AND THEN** Through 8/11: Thu-Fri 8 PM, Sat 4 and 8 PM, Sun 3 and 7 PM, Pride Arts Center, 4139 N. Broadway, nowandthenmusical.com, \$35-\$50.

RR The waste land Steep Theatre's Pomona plants a dystopian garden of evil.

A woman's search for her missing sister becomes a twisted fable of money, violence, sex, death, and Dungeons and Dragons in Alistair McDowall's creepy *Pomona*. Once a Victorian rural retreat lush with apple orchards and wildflowers that was developed into the Royal Pomona Palace—a concert hall four times the size of London's Royal Albert Hall, surrounded by magnificent gardens—the island of Pomona declined after an 1887 factory explosion into a wasteland of ruins, weeds, and deserted docks in the Manchester Ship Canal. On this island, once the site of anthropological shows of "human souvenirs" alongside its other entertainments, McDowall envisions a place where a city tucks away its appetites and ills. Steep Theatre's production, directed by Robin Witt, opens with the flick of a switchblade, quick and sharp as a match striking, on a long, narrow slot of a stage minimally set with pieces made of industrial waste (designed by Joe Schermoly). Ollie (Amber Sallis) is in a car with Zeppo (Peter Moore). In the back seat, a masked figure (Phoebe Moore) broods over D&D dice. Ollie's sister has vanished, but Zeppo refuses to get involved. "I just own everything," he says. "It's not good to get involved in everything." Told in disordered shards, the story that unfolds toggles between dystopian horror and mundane exchanges, presenting a disturbing vision of a world where no one is involved but everyone is affected. The cast is spot-on, with especially effective work by Brandon Rivera as the disarmingly awkward security guard/dungeon master Charlie and Ashlyn Lozano as the gutsy sex worker Fay. —**IRENE HSIAO** **POMONA** Through 8/24: Thu-Sat 8 PM, Sun 3 PM, Steep Theatre, 1115 W. Berwyn, 773-649-3186, steeptheatre.com, \$38 advance reserved seats, \$27 general admission, \$10 "access" tickets based on availability.

Dying, then laughing

An after-death insult fest takes center stage in *Roast*.

In lieu of a traditional funeral service, a young comedian asks for a livestreamed, no-holds-barred roast of honor to be performed by his colleagues and family at his wake. Complicating what could otherwise be a cathartic act of irreverence is the fact that the entire lineup is bitterly estranged, and his cause of death—suicide—makes it unclear if honoring wishes he made during an acute mental crisis is really healthy for anyone involved.

Harry Wood's debut play, presented by director Derek Bertelsen and the Comrades, makes real a fairly universal dark fantasy that taps into the comedian id tri-fecta of self-flagellation, self-indulgence, and tonal irony. Though not explicitly inspired by real headlines, it's impossible not to be reminded of the spate of stand-up industry deaths in recent years, and how Wood handles that fraught dramatic and comedic territory here is mixed; few of the broadest gags, like prerecorded ad bits and a cartoonishly stiff funeral director's emcee



Pomona 📷 LEE MILLER

work, really land. But some performances cut through, like a eulogy from a veteran industry manager (Kelli Walker) pleading for guidance on how to better help those under her wing.

At the concept level, there are some legitimate laughs in Wood's one-act, like a performer unironically plugging his podcast in front of his friend's casket, and a mortician—having only met the roastee as a corpse—resorting to insulting material inspired solely by his body on a slab. But much of what does work here is steamrolled by magnified performances that iron out any interesting wrinkles of subtlety the premise would seem to call for. —**DAN JAKES** **ROAST** Through 8/18: Thu-Sat 8 PM, Sun 3 PM, Greenhouse Theater Center, 2257 N. Lincoln, 773-404-7336, the-comrades.com, \$25, \$10 industry.

Corn in Gilead

The Spitfire Grill is fueled by Capraesque implausibilities.

Boy, oh boy, the residents of tiny Gilead, Wisconsin, need some hope. Good thing they're living in a musical. You see, greedy loggers swooped in a while back and cleared out all the mature trees in the local forest. Then the quarry where many residents worked shut down. But since dramatizing the effects of a sweeping regional economic downturn is patently beyond the reach of this quaint 2001 musical's creators (music and book by James Valcq, lyrics and book by Fred Alley), they pin the town's crippling despair on the disappearance of the town's favorite son during the Vietnam war a couple decades back. Now along comes tough-but-vulnerable young ex-con Percy, released to the care of Gilead's sheriff for reasons that never make much sense. She starts waiting tables at the title diner, run by tough-but-vulnerable old Hannah (Catherine Smitko), and through a series of Capraesque implausibilities, which also involve the town's preternaturally unliberated housewife Shelby (Dara Cameron), everyone finds civic pride.

How all the newly planted flower boxes and freshly painted house fronts will pay anyone's bills is left unanswered, thanks to the dramaturgical expediency typical of the American musical. Setting fundamental credulity aside, the show is tight, tuneful, and, under Tammy Mader's direction for American Blues Theater, impressively multidimensional. Best of all, Jacquelyne Jones as Percy never hits a false note in a role riven with clichés. Her exquisite vocal control lets her convey moments of delicate intimacy and full-throttle outrage with equal clarity. —**JUSTIN HAYFORD** **THE SPITFIRE GRILL** Through 8/17: Thu-Fri 7:30 PM, Sat 3 and 7:30

PM, Sun 2:30 PM; also Wed 8/14, 2:30 and 7:30 PM; no performance Sat 8/17, 7:30 PM, Stage 773, 1225 W. Belmont, 773-654-3103, americanbluestheater.com, \$29-\$39.

RR Weatherproof Bard Midsommer Flight's *The Tempest* provides an ingratiating (and free!) al fresco romance with gender twists.

A weekend marked by extreme heat and storms makes the cataclysm at the outset of *The Tempest* hit home. But even without that assist from nature, Midsommer Flight's free outdoor touring production of Shakespeare's late romance, directed by Beth Wolf, has plenty of resonant moments, thanks in part to the cross-gender casting of Stephanie Monday and Julie Proudfoot as Prospero and Alonso. The idea of powerful women being cheated of their place in public life—or even having their lives threatened—by callow, grasping men like Antonio (Dylan S. Roberts) and Sebastian (Scott Myers) feels mighty relevant.

Wolf's compact staging comes in at a tidy 90 minutes, but nothing feels rushed here. In addition to Monday's powerful sorceress, there are strong performances from Richard J. Eisloeffel as Caliban (more brooding Lost Boy than malevolent "mooncalf") and from Kat Moraros and Tom McGrath as Trinculo and Stephano, the drunken servants who join forces with Caliban to try to overthrow Prospero. Elizabeth Rentfro's music, performed by Elana Weiner-Kaplow's Ariel and her flower-children band of sprites, brings a folk-pop bounciness that contrasts with the more somber musings of Monday's Prospero on mortality and redemption. Despite some ambient neighborhood noise, the text comes through clearly. At the performance I attended, the line "the watchdogs bark" was greeted by a howl from an actual pooch. That sort of felicitous coincidence can't be guaranteed every time, but the possibility adds a flip of extra enjoyment to a show that wears its ingratiating charms with a light but sure-handed touch. —**KERRY REID** **THE TEMPEST** Through 8/25: Sat 6 PM, Sun 2 PM (except Sat 8/10, 11 AM); 7/27-7/28 and 8/17-8/18, Touhy Park, 7348 N. Paulina; 8/3-8/11, Chicago Women's Park and Gardens, 1801 S. Indiana; 8/24-8/25, Lincoln Park, 2045 Lincoln Park West, midsommerflight.com, free. 📍

ONCE UPON A TIME . . . IN HOLLYWOOD ★★
Directed by Quentin Tarantino. R, 159 min. In wide release.

FILM



Once Upon a Time . . . in Hollywood

REVIEW

Quentin Tarantino's bedtime story

Once Upon a Time . . . in Hollywood indulges the fantasy of movie history when it could be questioning it.

By BEN SACHS

Consider Quentin Tarantino's finest film to date to be *Inglourious Basterds* (2009), in large part because of how it questions cinema's tenuous relationship to history. Less a movie about World War II than a movie about World War II movies, *Basterds* famously (or infamously, depending on who you ask) climaxed with the image of gung-ho American soldiers assassinating Adolf Hitler in a movie theater—a brazenly fictional innovation that drew attention not only to its own artifice, but to that of any historical drama. In breaking the unspoken rule that narratives set in the past must respect the actual historical narrative, Tarantino acknowledged that any time a filmmaker makes

a narrative movie, his or her project is grounded in make-believe. Narrative cinema conjures its own reality that plays on viewers' desires, whether through the charisma of performers, filmmaking technique, or the progression of the story. Ultimately these things have nothing to do with history, as much as most historical dramas try to pretend otherwise.

Since *Basterds*, Tarantino has been spinning out variations on the insights of that film, mixing the facts of different historical eras with the flights of his imagination. *Django Unchained* (2012) took place in the antebellum south and followed the vengeful exploits of a runaway slave, while the *The Hateful Eight* (2015) took place after the Civil War and ➔

★★★★ EXCELLENT ★★ GOOD ★★ AVERAGE ★ POOR ● WORTHLESS

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played fast and loose with America's societal tensions at that time. (Perhaps Tarantino's most topical film, *Hateful Eight* presaged the 2016 election in its portrait of Americans with competing, antagonistic views forced to share the same space.) Now Tarantino has delivered *Once Upon a Time . . . in Hollywood*, a movie set in Los Angeles in 1969 that touches upon the film and television industry of the late 60s, the Manson family, and other aspects of American culture in the Vietnam era. If this film feels less satisfying than Tarantino's last three, it's likely because the writer-director has exhausted whatever he has to say about the relationship between movies and history and is simply spinning his wheels.

That's not to say that *Hollywood* is without its pleasures. From moment to moment, Tarantino remains one of the most impressive stylists currently working in American cinema, and the film contains a trove of entertaining crane shots, cutaway gags, and stray visual details. He also remains an impressive director of actors: *Hollywood* features two marvelous performances from Leonardo DiCaprio and Brad Pitt, and the supporting cast (which features Margot Robbie, Al Pacino, Kurt Russell, and Lena Dunham) is seldom less than enjoyable. Yet despite its epic length, *Hollywood* doesn't feel as much like a grand statement as it does an accumulation of pleasant moments, as if Tarantino had simply assembled everything he liked about late-60s California (both real and imagined) and decided to play with his collection. The film doesn't wear out its welcome until its final half hour, when Tarantino scrambles to bring his various ideas and fetishes to a slam-bang conclusion comparable to that of *Basterds*, but when it does, the overall thinness of the project becomes all too clear.

Hollywood begins in black and white, showing scenes from a fictional, early 60s TV western called *Bounty Law*. Tarantino soon reveals that the lead actor on the show, Rick Dalton (DiCaprio), is a 50s movie star who's spent the 60s working in television. Rick's fall from stardom has dovetailed with a descent into alcoholism. When the story begins, he needs to be driven everywhere by his stuntman cum personal assistant, Cliff Booth (Pitt), since his license has been revoked after too many DUIs. Much of *Hollywood's* narrative concerns the touching friendship between Rick and Cliff, which is rooted in honesty, affection, and mutual need. Cliff may be more easygoing and cocksure than the anxious, self-doubting Rick,

yet he too has his demons, having possibly murdered his wife in a highly gossiped-about incident that Rick is careful not discuss. The film only reveals Cliff's troubled past when the stunt coordinator on another TV western (on which Rick is appearing as a guest star) refuses to work with Cliff because of his history. In one of the film's more affecting moments, Rick defends his friend and convinces the stunt coordinator to change his mind.

Tarantino interweaves this fictional portrait of Rick and Cliff's friendship and professional obligations with scenes from the life of the not-fictional model-actress Sharon Tate (Robbie), who's presented as a sort of magical sprite floating through the Hollywood party scene and whom Tarantino imagines living (with her husband, Roman Polanski) next door to Rick's mansion. Also drifting through the narrative are several of the wayward young women who belong to Charles Manson's cult (which was based on a ranch outside Hollywood) and are often seen hitchhiking around the city. Because the film is so relaxed, it never develops a sense of dread from its crosscutting between Tate and the Manson girls—who would intersect horrifically in real life—nor does it achieve the summative, poignant quality it's after in associating Rick's professional downfall (meant to reflect the decline of the Hollywood studio system) with the rise of Manson's zeitgeist-ending community. Rather, it's in the smaller, less grandstanding moments that *Hollywood* thrives: Cliff's lonely evening in a trailer with his dog, Rick's discussion of a western novel with a little girl he meets on a TV shoot, Sharon's childlike appreciation of her own performance in the Dean Martin vehicle *The Wrecking Crew* at a downtown movie palace.

Though Tarantino mixes fiction and historical fact cleverly and confidently, I'm not sure what he wanted to achieve with the mix this time, and I'm not sure if he knew either. Some of the combinations feel silly and uninspired, like when Cliff fights Bruce Lee on a TV backlot or when Steve McQueen turns up to ponder Sharon's love life. Passages like these (and the film contains many of them) suggest that Tarantino is doing little more than indulging his fandom of Hollywood lore, playing around in the past rather than questioning it. Perhaps the film's title is meant to be a clue to its mission: this is a bedtime story Tarantino is telling to himself. **A**

 @1bsachs



Barbara Rubin and the Exploding NY Underground

NOW PLAYING

RR **N** Barbara Rubin and the Exploding NY Underground

As much a celebration as it is a documentary, this profile of experimental filmmaker and legendary scenester Barbara Rubin persuasively argues that the avant-garde movies made in New York City in the 1960s comprise one of the most important movements in cinema history. Director Chuck Smith touches on such major figures as Andy Warhol, Jonas Mekas, and Shirley Clarke; not only does he pithily explain their significance to American art, but he conveys the excitement of their work through a combination of carefully selected clips and a poetic editing style that reflects a thorough understanding of their filmmaking. The film characterizes Rubin as a zealous champion of avant-garde cinema and a crucial connector within the experimental community, having introduced Warhol to both Bob Dylan and the Velvet Underground. It also paints her as something of an enigma when it considers the final decade of her life, when she turned her back on the art scene to become a devout Orthodox Jew. **—BEN SACHS 79 min. Smith attends the Friday 8:30 PM screening. Showing with Rubin's 1963 film Christmas on Earth (see separate listing). Fri 7/26, 3:45 and 8:30 PM; Sat 7/27, 5:15 PM; Sun 7/28, 5:30 PM; Mon 7/29, 6 PM; and Wed 7/31, 8:15 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center**

RR **N** Carmine Street Guitars

Experiencing this documentary without encountering any advance hype is like stumbling into the cozy Greenwich Village shop of the title: it's a ride down the rabbit hole to a world of unexpected and singular pleasures. Rick Kelly is the rock-steady proprietor and artisan who handcrafts guitars from reclaimed old wood (much of it from demolished Manhattan buildings erected during the late 19th century); his punk platinum blond apprentice Cindy Hulej decorates the instruments with intricate calligraphic designs; and his nonagenarian computer-savvy mother, Dorothy, runs the office. Musicians who drop in, swap stories, and play some tunes include Nels Cline, looking for a birthday gift for his

pal and Wilco bandmate Jeff Tweedy; jazz innovator Bill Frisell; Patti Smith's veteran sideman Lenny Kaye; Lou Reed's buddy Stewart Hurwood; urbane Captain Kirk Douglas of *The Tonight Show's* hip-hop house band the Roots; Bob Dylan band member and session artist Charlie Sexton; and the charismatic, multifaceted Marc Ribot. Producer-director and pop culture enthusiast Ron Mann, the Canadian director whose close observation, gentle humor, and wide-ranging curiosity distinguish such nonfiction films as *Comic Book Confidential* (1988) and *Grass* (1999), credits Jim Jarmusch as the movie's "instigator," and Jarmusch obligingly pops up, looking every inch his hipster self. Toronto rock 'n' rollers the Sadies provide additional music for the film's seductive soundtrack. **—ANDREA GRONVALL 80 min. Fri 7/26, 2 and 6:30 PM; Sat 7/27, 7:45 PM; Sun 7/28, 1 PM; Mon 7/29, 6 PM; Tue 7/30, 8:30 PM; Wed 7/31, 8:30 PM; and Thu 8/1, 8:15 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center**

RR **N** Christmas on Earth

Barbara Rubin was just 18 years old when she made this classic of experimental cinema (1963), a paean to sexual exploration comparable to Kenneth Anger's *Fireworks* and Jack Smith's *Flaming Creatures*. The film consists of two separate 16-millimeter projections, with one intended to be overlaid upon the other; Rubin also devised instructions for the projectionist to create his or her own soundtrack by playing whatever he or she encountered on the radio. The content features close-ups of female genitalia and explicit footage of two men having sex, yet the film never feels salacious; rather, it invokes a sense of innocent sexual discovery that complements the formal discoveries happening with the sound and image. (The playful title hints at the feelings of exuberance communicated by the work as a whole.) Please note that this screening will be of a recent digital restoration of *Christmas on Earth*, which can only approximate the experimentation of a live projection of the work. **—BEN SACHS 30 min. Showing with Chuck Smith's 2018 documentary Barbara Rubin and the Exploding NY Underground (see separate listing). Fri 7/26, 3:45 and 8:30 PM; Sat 7/27, 5:15 PM; Sun 7/28, 5:30 PM; Mon 7/29, 6 PM; and Wed 7/31, 8:15 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center**

N Eastland: Chicago's Deadliest Day

One of Chicago's best-kept secrets takes center stage in Chuck Coppola and Harvey Moshman's documentary. The year is 1915, and thousands of Western Electric factory workers, most of whom are eastern-European immigrants, board the SS *Eastland* on the Chicago River to sail to neighboring Michigan City, Indiana, for a rare vacation day with their families. Unfortunately no one on the ship makes it to their destination that day—and for many years restricted access to footage from the wreck left Chicagoans without a clue why. The documentary's producers delve into details behind the disaster through the lens of survivors, their families, first responders, and newly discovered footage. The documentary seamlessly weaves the *Eastland* into the family trees of descendants of those involved in the wreck; it also gives a fresh perspective on how the capsized ship affected immigrant communities, who made up half of Chicago residents at the time. While at surface level the film can seem like a sensationalized recounting of a catastrophe, the heart of it shows how the debacle brought Chicagoans together in a united front against greed and immorality. —**JANAYA GREENE** 83 min. *Airing Thu 8/25, 8 PM, on WTTW-Channel 11.*

N The Lion King

Where has Rafiki gone? The beloved mandrill voiced by Robert Guillaume in the first *Lion King* (1994) barely has a role in the 2019 reboot. The new movie suffers from the lack of his deranged, whimsical magic. The spectacular use of CGI makes the animals look very real, but emotions are hard to pick up on at times; this feels like an Animal Planet Africa special with an all-star cast. Seth Rogen as a body-positive singing warthog works well, and Billy Eichner steals the show as a meerkat with some funny one-liners, but Beyoncé's voice on the soundtrack as lions run around the plains is probably the emotional highlight of the film. Watch this *Lion King* for the technical achievement and musical numbers, and then watch the original to feel satisfied. —**TED PIEKARZ** PG, 118 min. *ArcLight, Block 37, Cicero 14, City North 14, Ford City, Galewood Crossings 14, Harper Theater, Lake Theatre, Navy Pier IMAX, River East 21, Showplace ICON, Studio Movie Grill—Chatham, 600 N. Michigan, Webster Place*

N Rojo

Many works of art foreground the victims of corruption; fewer investigate the hearts and minds of those who turn their backs. This elegant example, set in a hushed Argentine province in 1975, follows a local lawyer (Darío Grandinetti) who performs the bidding of the country's tyrannical regime in exchange for money, status, and the ability to maintain a haughty, hypocritical remove from other citizens who oppose his way of life. "Victim" is a dirty word to him, until he starts to feel the repercussions of his actions himself. It's inside this yawning empathy gap that writer-director Benjamín Naishtat fashions his third feature, though it's more of a treat for cinephiles than political history buffs. Mixing elements of neo noirs and spaghetti westerns with a distinctly 70s shooting style, Naishtat and cinematographer Pedro Sotero ensure that each dissolve and crash zoom ratchets up, rather than distracts from, the intricate human drama. What's more, the combination of the film's period-authentic production design and earthy color palette with surreal narrative turns and visual flourishes generates a destabilizing effect. It seems to ask: How can one uncouple truth from lies when the two have



Christmas on Earth

become so tightly knotted? Naishtat shows where these threads meet and twist, but leaves it up to the viewer to disentangle them. In Spanish with subtitles. —**LEAH PICKETT** 109 min. *Fri 7/26, 8:15 PM; Sat 7/27, 3 PM; Sun 7/28, 5:30 PM; Mon 7/29, 8 PM; Tue 7/30, 8:15 PM; Wed 7/31, 6 PM; and Thu 8/1, 6 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center*

ALSO PLAYING

RR Bringing Up Baby

Though it's almost impossible, try to sit back sometime and enjoy this 1938 Howard Hawks masterpiece not only for its gags, but for the grace of its construction, the assurance of its style, and the richness of its themes. Cary Grant's adventures with Katharine Hepburn lead from day into night, tamedness into wildness, order into chaos; needless to say, it's a deeply pessimistic film, though it draws its grim conclusions in a searingly bright and chipper way. Amazingly, the film was a failure when first released (during Hepburn's "box-office poison" period), but time has revealed its brilliance, as well as the apparent impossibility of its like ever being seen again (*What's Up, Doc?* notwithstanding). With May Robson, Charlie Ruggles, and Barry Fitzgerald. —**DAVE KEHR** 102 min. 35 mm. *Fri 7/26, 4:30 PM; Sat 7/27, 3 PM; and Thu 8/1, 6 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center*

The Clock

Vincente Minnelli's first nonmusical (1945) is a charming and stylish if somewhat sentimental love story about a soldier (Robert Walker) on a two-day leave in New York who meets and marries an office worker (Judy Garland). Filmed on a studio soundstage with enough expertise to make it seem like a location shoot, the film is appealing largely for its performances and the innocence it projects. (Similar qualities can be found, at a half-century remove, in Richard Linklater's *Before Sunrise*.) In addition to Walker and Garland, Keenan Wynn and Moyna Macgill are well used. Screenwriters Robert Nathan and Joseph Schrank adapted a story by Paul and Pauline Gallico. —**JONATHAN ROSENBAUM** 91 min. 35 mm. *Wed 7/31, 7:30 PM. Northeastern Illinois University*

RR Fences

August Wilson wouldn't entrust the movies with his Pulitzer Prize-winning play *Fences* (1983) unless it was given to a Black director; he's gotten his wish with Denzel Washington, though Washington doesn't really direct the story so much as get out of its way. Adapted from a 2010 Broadway revival, this is primarily an actors' showcase for him as the deeply flawed hero, a former Negro League ballplayer scraping by as a garbage collector in late-50s Pittsburgh; Viola Davis as the man's loyal wife, who wants a better relationship for him and

his teenage son; and Stephen Henderson as his work buddy, who sees a different side of him and tries not to look. The film (2016) was shot on location in Pittsburgh's Hill District, but the action is so insistently theatrical the frame might as well have a proscenium arch built around it. In the end that doesn't matter because Wilson's play is such an extraordinary social statement, its bitter patriarch rivaling Willy Loman in the greatness of his smallness. With Mykelti Williamson and Jovan Adepo. —**J.R. JONES** PG-13, 139 min. *Outdoor screening. Tue 7/30, 6:30 PM. Pritzker Pavilion, Millennium Park* **FREE**

The Grand Budapest Hotel

Wes Anderson's fanciful comedy is set in the mythical former Republic of Zubrowka, where an elderly hotel owner (F. Murray Abraham) entertains a visiting writer (Jude Law) with the story of his boyhood at the hotel in the 1930s and its dapper concierge (Ralph Fiennes). —**J.R. JONES** R, 99 min. *Fri 7/26-Mon 7/29, 11 PM. Logan*

RR Killer of Sheep

The first feature (1978) of the highly talented Black filmmaker Charles Burnett, who set most of his early films in Watts (including *My Brother's Wedding* and *To Sleep With Anger*); this one deals episodically with the life of a slaughterhouse worker. Shot on a year's worth of weekends for under \$10,000, this remarkable work is conceivably the single best feature about ghetto life. It was selected for preservation by the National Film Registry as one of the key works in American cinema—ironic and belated recognition of a film that, for years, had virtually no distribution. It shouldn't be missed. With Henry Gayle Sanders. —**JONATHAN ROSENBAUM** 87 min. 35 mm. *Burnett attends the screening. Fri 7/26, 7 PM. Univ. of Chicago Doc Films*

RR Penguin Highway

In this irresistible Japanese anime, a solemn fourth-grade science wiz with an intense curiosity about the world in general—and his busty dental hygienist in particular—is thrown together with her over the summer when large flocks of cute penguins suddenly invade his quiet inland town. The mystery of their appearance deepens when he learns it's she who's summoning them, although she can't explain how. Making his feature debut, 30-year-old director Hiroyasu Ishida confidently adapts Tomihiko Morimi's best-selling coming-of-age novel, gracefully segueing from the hero's prepubescent urges to reflections on nature and impermanence, and illustrating brief digressions on the space-time continuum and Einstein's general theory of relativity with panache. It's a heady brew, gorgeous to behold, and wise about children and the places in their hearts. In Japanese with subtitles. —**ANDREA GRONVALL** 118 min. *Sat 7/27, 7 and 9:30 PM. Univ. of Chicago Doc Films*

Resident Evil

Though based on a popular video game, this 2002 film's heaviest influences are the works of George Romero and John Carpenter. A team of commandos descend into a secret underground lab where, unbeknownst to them, a zombie-making virus has been released. Milla Jovovich is a scantily clad amnesiac, Michelle Rodriguez is a tough soldier, and everyone else is zombie food. As in Romero's *Dawn of the Dead*, a vague social message is buried in the gore—corporations are bad. And like Carpenter's *Halloween* and *The Thing*, *Resident* hits the ground running and never looks back. But after an hour of propulsive pacing the shock value wears off, and all that's left is pop-up carnage. Paul Anderson (*Event Horizon*) directed and wrote the screenplay. —**HANK SARTIN** R, 100 min. *Tue 7/30-Thu 8/1, 11 PM. Logan* **18**

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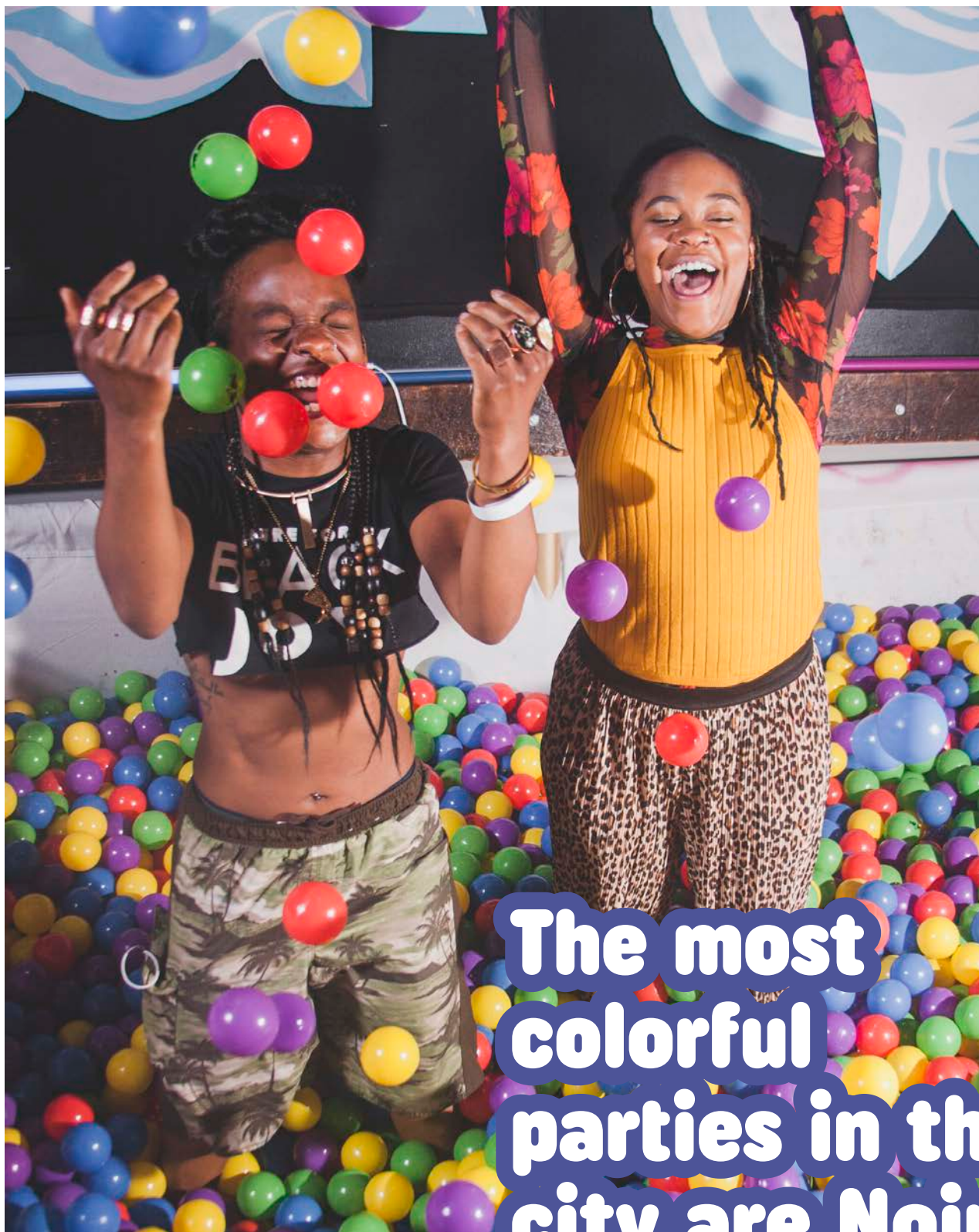
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JULY 25, 2019 • CHICAGO READER 25



Party Noire founders Nick Alder and Rae Chardonnay Taylor at Renaissance One on June 27 ALLY ALMORE

The most colorful parties in the city are Noire

Nick Alder and Rae Chardonnay Taylor of Party Noire get to fun by going through respect, safety, community, and empowerment.

By **MATT HARVEY**

A three-foot-deep rainbow-colored ball pit at the entrance to a show was a first for me—I had no idea that by the end of the night I’d end up juggling them, circled by spectators. I was at Renaissance One, a Pride-themed showcase put on by Party Noire at the Promontory on Thursday, June 27, and that kind of spontaneity animated the night. The glowing dance floor changed colors underfoot, glitter-filled beach balls bounced around the room, and iridescent streamers fluttered from the ceiling. The equally spectacular crowd, full of queer and trans people of color, kept the energy high with death drops, duck walks, and dance-offs—and the artists would sometimes hop off the stage to join them. I hadn’t come to Renaissance One expecting that kind of splendor, but for many of the people in attendance, it’s the norm—to them, that’s just what a Party Noire event looks like.

Nickecia “Nick” Alder and Rae Chardonnay Taylor—aka DJ Rae Chardonnay—founded the Chicago-based event-planning company Party Noire in 2015. According to their website, Party Noire “creates experiences that celebrate Black femmes, queer women of color, and Black womynhood along the gender spectrum.” Renaissance One, a collaboration with Red Bull Presents, included performances from Chattanooga’s BbyMutha and Baltimore’s TT the Artist, as well as homegrown DJs and musicians Kidd Kenn, Blu Bone, Professor Wrecks, and Hijo Pródigo.

“Our goal with Renaissance One was to activate a safe space for Black women and Black girls,” says Alder. “With this event we wanted to continue doing what we’ve been doing to celebrate Pride: making a cool-ass dance party on the south side.”

Alder and Taylor, both 31, are queer-identifying women, but neither had much if any experience with Chicago Pride celebrations prior to Party Noire. Taylor didn’t even go to one till 2013. “I hadn’t been until a friend of mine visiting from Florida asked to go,” she says. “After I went I was like, ‘OK, cool, I don’t have to do this again.’ I just wasn’t thrilled or moved to continue to go.”

Experiences like Taylor’s inspired the mission of Party Noire. In contrast to what she found in Boystown—an unfamiliar north-side neighborhood and mostly white crowd, neither of which helped her feel comfortable celebrating—she and Alder aim to throw functions that energize their audience to return again and again. A major part of that is aesthetic. Taylor and Alder create the concepts, but they credit collaborators such as VAM Studio co-



Left: Attendees strike a pose against the Promontory's record wall during Renaissance One, a Party Noire event created in collaboration with Red Bull Presents.

Above: Dancers at Party Noire's Deep n' Buck IV, held at the Promontory on May 27. ALLY ALMORE

PEACH & PARTY NOIRE PRESENT POUND THE ALARM (ODE TO CARNIVAL)

An all-day event at Northalsted Market Days featuring art installations, vendors, dancers, and live music, including DJ Rae Chardonnay, DJ Bonita Appleblunt, DJ [X]P, and Cut-Cuz. Sun 8/11, noon-10 PM, Northalsted Market Days stage at Belmont and Halsted, \$10 suggested donation, all ages

founder Vincent Martell with conjuring up the environments where their ideas come to life.

"Vincent was key to how we got in touch with Red Bull in the first place—he introduced us to someone who was a part of their culture-curation team," says Taylor.

Alder especially likes the way VAM can help audiences get on board with Party Noire's ideas and match the energy of their events. "In terms of our intention of bringing people along with us, I think that Vincent's organization truly embodies that with the work that they do," she says. A Chicago-based

full-service video-production company, VAM also specializes in set design. Party Noire has collaborated with Martell's company in the past, but this time it was Red Bull that hired him. The dazzling environment at Renaissance One was VAM's handiwork.

The vibrant dance floor was a stage for the twerkers, headbangers, duck walkers, and death droppers. At the same time, the glowing bar, colorful couches, and outdoor deck provided a refuge for the settled-down drink sippers—and the whole scene created an unrivaled backdrop for the selfie takers. The feeling of freedom in the room backed up everything that Taylor and Alder talk about—an absence of the wariness and self-consciousness that queer people of color feel when they're "othered" or put on display.

"I would often find that in many spaces, there felt like an expectation to perform. Like

going to a club, and you're expected to wear certain things and behave a certain way," Alder says. "With Party Noire I still feel like people are performing, but they're performing for them-damn-selves."

Party Noire is dedicated to creating empowering spaces for Black queer folk, of course, but their other main foundation is collaborations like the one with Martell. Even Alder and Taylor's own relationship is the result of cultivating connections in the city's creative scene.

"We had known each other through community," Alder says. "People had been telling me about Rae, people had been telling Rae about me. We exchanged a chain of e-mails, and finally we met up for tea downtown." During that three-hour meeting at Teavana, they laid the groundwork for Party Noire.

"At first the plan was to just have me be the DJ," Taylor says. "Then in our second ➔

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Jonathan Wilson

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Guests at Party Noire's third-anniversary celebration in September 2018 @ ALLY ALMORE

continued from 27

face-to-face meeting, we decided that it made sense for me to help with formulating the entire thing.” It was in that second meeting that they came up with the name.

Each of the two women is a force of her own. Alder is a PhD candidate and the entrepreneur behind the online community Black Girl Fly Mag. Taylor is not only an arts administrator and organizer of the Black Eutopia forums but also an internationally traveled DJ—she was voted the best in the city in the *Reader’s* 2016 Best of Chicago poll.

“Black Eutopia started from me wanting to have this festival of the ideal,” Taylor says. Black Eutopia’s first event was a 2014 barbershop conversation hosted at Carter’s in North Lawndale, which asked the question, “Why is a barbershop like an art gallery?” “The plan is to ignite Black people to think about what their utopia would be like,” she says. “Now we organize smaller workshops throughout the city.” As Rae Chardonnay, Taylor has DJed for the Museum of Contemporary Art, Infiniti, Soho House, Nike, and many others. She has also been a featured DJ at Red Bull events, including Renaissance One.

Alder is a New York City native who came to Chicago in 2013 to attend grad school at Loyola University, where she’s currently pursuing a doctorate in psychology. She developed Black Girl Fly Mag in 2013 to tailor editorial and social media content for Black women. “When we started Party Noire, we didn’t really have any followers on social media, so the platform I’d created with Black Girl Fly Mag was instrumental in helping us promote our events,” Alder says. “Learning

how to be a good manager and how to run my own thing were useful skills that I carried with me from that experience and have been helpful in running things for Party Noire.”

In September 2015, Party Noire hosted their first event, a day party called Black to the Future. For nearly a year, day parties made up the entirety of their programming. At the foundation of Party Noire, the team had a third member of the team, Lauren Ash, but according to Alder and Taylor, in October 2017 she left to pursue writing a book full-time. Today Ash runs a holistic wellness and beauty website called Black Girl in Om.

In 2016 Party Noire took their show on the road for the first time, visiting Alder’s hometown of NYC. “I remember when we first booked the event and Nick was like, ‘People in New York don’t dance at parties,’” Taylor says. “I was just like, ‘Oh? Well, we about to make them dance.’”

Since then, Party Noire have been back to New York five times for events, to Detroit three times, and to Miami once. “Chicago is a unique city overall, so it’s always different everywhere we go,” Taylor says. “One of the biggest differences is just noticing how much more integrated queer communities in these other cities are in terms of race.”

Chicago has long been one of the most racially segregated cities in the country, and queerness doesn’t bridge that divide. For Black and Brown queer people from the south and west sides, the north side’s queer community can often feel inaccessible or unwelcoming, even with good intentions on all sides. It’s why bringing queer festivities south of Roosevelt is one of Party Noire’s core goals.

“We’ve collaborated with some great organizations for events based in Boystown, but the demographic that comes out always reflects the location,” Taylor says.

Party Noire consider staying true to their identity and ideals essential, so much so that they’re often wary of media coverage of their events. “Sometimes it can work in your favor, but sometimes it can start to diminish your brand. We don’t want the people attending our shows to feel like they’re becoming spectacles,” Taylor says. “It’s considered a safe space for a multitude of reasons—one is that you won’t have to always worry about ending up on camera.”

Party Noire were featured in the *Tribune* only months after their first event, and that had some side effects. “After we had that piece in the *Tribune*, we definitely saw an increase in white people at a few of our events,” Alder says. “But I think we’ve had the right amount of coverage to ensure that we’re not exposing the brand to people who we aren’t necessarily looking to talk to.”

Alder and Taylor recognize that they need to be protective of their community: the people they aim to empower and uplift have historically been vilified and endangered because of their identities. A 2012 study by the Williams Institute, a think tank at the UCLA School of Law, shows that the incarceration rate for queer people is three times the average for general population, and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights reported in 2014 that life expectancy for transgender women in the Americas is 30 to 35 years.

That said, Party Noire are enthusiastic about allyship. “You don’t have to attend the events to be an ally to us,” Alder says. “John Kosmo, a former employee of Red Bull, for example, is an ally who has never stepped foot inside one of our events. He has given us resources and opportunities to grow early on.” They encourage people to support Party Noire in other ways, including helping to secure event spaces or donating money to support the grant portion of their annual Femme Noir Award for Black women in the creative industry.

“There was one time when a white woman who lives on the north side reached out to offer to be a designated driver, in order to bring the Black girls who wanted to attend from up north to our event out south,” Taylor says. “We didn’t take her up on the offer, but it was the thought that counts.”

Running Party Noire presents too many challenges for Alder and Taylor to handle alone and keep their sanity. They’ve hired a team of three part-time employees. “We were



A pair of partiers at Deep n' Buck IV
© ALLY ALMORE

art director Karlie Thornton, administrative assistant Vel Brown, and social-media director Janaya Greene (who also works as an administrative assistant for the *Reader*).

By creating events that explicitly welcome Black femme-identifying people, Party Noire help sustain and support the thriving queer community of color in Chicago. "There is a spirit of resistance in what we do," says Alder. "It isn't our main mission, but it is a side effect of centering Black women and Black queer folk."

Both Taylor and Alder find the work that Party Noire does as rewarding as it is essential. "We get a lot of joy from seeing people be their authentic selves. It's even allowed more room for me to be able to see myself and my wholeness," Taylor says. "It's present in the way they show up to Party Noire. The community has taught us that you are whole just as you are." 

 @MattheMajor

lucky enough to have interns who love what we do and love how we do it," Alder says. "Eventually we were able to give them opportunities as employees." That team consists of

3/2ures

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Attempting to vogue while recording a “music video” in Acuvue’s on-site studio at Pitchfork 📸 TIM NAGLE

The quest to be Pitchfork’s perfect consumer

What happens if you indulge every corporate sponsor at the festival? Does the Chase Sapphire Lounge have to let you in?

By J.R. NELSON

SATURDAY, 4:55 PM Call me Happy Meal®. As sudden late afternoon rains swirl and eddy overhead, we’ve been evacuated from Union Park, and the dozens of us gathered at the McDonald’s on Lake Street have the shivery, put-upon look common to dogs given an unwelcome bath. The plebes are all wet.

For me, though, this Saturday at the Pitchfork Music Festival has been a failure in ways unrelated to the weather. In seeking perfect corporate hospitality, partaking eagerly of every sponsored shenanigan on the grounds, I’ve ignored the live music all around me, my

devoted friends, and the warnings of Mother Nature herself. I’ve tried to give away childish things but been embarrassed by a temper tantrum. I’ve tried to engage with a new sense of vision for my life and thus undergo a great transition, but only danced like a fool. To approach an inner peace that ruthlessly eludes me, I have invited skilled practitioners of alternative medicine to put crystals in my ears and massage me with precious oils, yet my nerves still jangle. I have taken to drink. But most appallingly, the glistening Chase Sapphire Lounge is still beyond my reach!

And so, I’ve come out of the rain to seek a child’s hastily prepared boxed dinner.

Perhaps I should start at the beginning.

SATURDAY, 1:05 PM I remember an interview in which Pulp’s Jarvis Cocker talked about the conundrum of the VIP section: after social climbing through level after level after level, ultimate victory means finding yourself in a brightly lit closet eating cake off a paper plate with Simon LeBon.

Like many journalists, I’ve gotten my filthy mitts on VIP passes for music festivals in the

past. Sadly, the VIP experience at Pitchfork consists largely of endlessly scanning an enclosed swath of park perhaps 500 feet on a side and feeling a needling sense of disappointment that so many people you respect (and quite a few you don’t) perform similarly unimportant tasks but are obviously far better compensated for it than you. In past years, my typical response has been to sate this melancholy with Kind bars and tiny artisanal tacos. Now, my plan is to flee this nest of vipers for a wonderland whose existence I discovered only yesterday—the Chase Sapphire Lounge. Rumors abound: Blue macarons in clear boxes. A tower of antipasto that brushes the clouds. Folding fans, like the kind you see old ladies snapping and waving in Baptist churches, free for the taking. And jugs of iced tea! I must enter this realm of riches, but I have heard that the gatekeepers are merciless.

SATURDAY, 1:15 PM Such ambitions call for a drink or two. Luckily, the Pitchfork quest I have set myself—to engage with as many corporate sponsors as humanly possible in one day—includes sallying forth to purveyors of alcohol. Away from the shade of VIP, among the masses who are watching bands and dancing, the day is scalding hot. Friends have cautioned me that booze can foul up the body’s natural response to overheating, and I’m out of practice when it comes to evaluating the seriousness of such warnings—despite partying through my 20s and early 30s like I had a death wish, I now very rarely partake of the devil’s amber. But the gent minding the kiosk for Singleton Single Malt Scotch Whisky wears no judgment on his face, gifting me a branded pair of sunglasses and a bag of Swedish Fish to go along with my vaguely watermelon-flavored cocktail. I pretend I’m getting another Singleton Scottish Cooler for a friend, and double fist for bravery.

SATURDAY, 1:35 PM I’ve reached my most desired destination, the Chase Sapphire Lounge, where a personable young lady with an iPad informs me that I can’t, in fact, come in. I must have a Chase Sapphire Preferred® Card.



I had second thoughts while recycling this T-shirt. TIM NAGLE



Outside the coveted Chase Sapphire Lounge TIM NAGLE

I have a Chase Freedom Unlimited® Card, and I've maintained an account with Chase since its merger with Bank One, which if I recall correctly was sometime during the Nixon administration—but this lounge is exclusively for bearers of the Sapphire Preferred® Card. Before retreating, I stand on tippy-toes to look past the iPad woman and see what might very well be a tower of sweaty, delicious salami.

SATURDAY, 1:55 PM Tim Nagle, the photographer assigned to document my quest, is plainly embarrassed for me. At the Marine Layer trailer, I'm supposed to be trading in five old T-shirts for cash toward a new one. Marine Layer shirts are great, with stylish designs and finely woven cotton, and my old band T-shirts are not great—their florid yellow pit stains are almost painterly in their abstract intensity. Last week I spent hours carefully selecting the



It was more difficult than I imagined to persuade the Acuvue people to put contact lenses in my eyes themselves. TIM NAGLE

most disposable five from my vast collection, but after I hand over the first three, my old punk soul recoils. I tangle with the Marine Layer collection guy over an Iceage shirt, but he wins out. Into the bin it goes. In anguish, I bury my face in my beloved Screaming Females tee.

SATURDAY, 2:45 PM It's almost time to make another run at the Sapphire gatekeeper, but on the way I spot a giant, Airstream-trailer-size Svedka Vodka bottle on its side, filled with people drinking pink, boozy slushies. The slushies aren't cheap, but I buy two and slam them.

SATURDAY, 3:05 PM Tim humors me with an idea. Perhaps the Chase Sapphire Lounge will let him take some photos? He's more charming than I am, I admit, but he gets nowhere. I tell the young lady with the iPad that I used to caddy for Chase CEO Jamie Dimon when I was in high school (I'm lying, but my actual high school experience was sufficiently strange that I don't feel like I am). She stands firm, though, and points to a swinging bench outside the lounge, offering me a seat.

SATURDAY, 3:35 PM I mosey over to the Virtue Cider Farmhouse, near the festival entrance, which is smaller and looks more portable than most real farmhouses I've seen. The delicious,

wholesome smell of apples is undercut by my drink, which tastes more like an appalling Honeycrisp nougat. I slam it and buy another—I think my taste buds are failing, but I want to make sure.

SATURDAY, 4:10 PM My vision has been suffering in middle age, and in the past half hour or so it's gotten suddenly much more blurry. Thankfully, the folks representing Acuvue (specifically, their Oasys lenses with Transition Light Intelligent Technology) seem to think they can help. They ask if I have an optometrist. I ask if they can put their contact lenses on me, since I'm too afraid to touch my own eyes. They politely refuse, and instead offer me the chance to make a music video in their semiprofessional studio. I dance wildly, borrowing what choreography I can remember from Madonna's "Vogue," and because there is no actual music playing, I hear Tim taking photos and laughing. I don't care. Afterward, an Acuvue staff member helps me e-mail the video to myself.

SATURDAY, 4:35 PM I'm back in the VIP section, visiting the Equinox Luxury Fitness Club Tent. An acupuncturist has already glued jewels on the pressure points in my ears to relieve stress, but I've come for a massage. Everyone here has suspiciously good posture and really tight abs. I comment to one of Equinox's help-

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Victory! Sort of! TIM NAGLE

continued from 31

ful associates about this, and as she drapes a cold eucalyptus towel over my neck, she asks if I've thought about improving my own core strength. I explain that when it comes to core strength, my mascot is Twinkie the Kid (and we both look good in a cowboy hat).

I ask her if she's tried Bulleit Bourbon's Kentucky Mule, which as far as I can recall consists of rye, ginger beer, and lime juice. It's sublime! In the strictest confidence, I whisper that I've had three of them today. She looks at me with sympathy. Naturally, ten minutes later, during the first professionally administered massage of my adult life, the park is evacuated due to a dangerous storm.

SATURDAY, 6:25 PM Union Park has finally reopened, and I see a young man drifting along on a Onewheel, which looks like a skateboard with one giant wheel sticking up through the middle. I wonder how he got into the festival with such a device, but he looks like Jesus—that is, both the Lamb of God and the character on *The Walking Dead*—so I assume he has special privileges. Maybe I shouldn't have had that last CBD soda from Bangers & Lace on my way back from the portable toilets? Jesus seems to be glowing.

I've been seeing fresh-faced Gen Z types riding around on Onewheels for months, and a thought occurs to me: that while young people have been deftly guiding me through the

ins and outs of product tie-ins and free swag all day, very few seem interested in claiming any for themselves. Generation Z apparently regards corporate gibberish as deeply out of style. I ask Jesus if he's made it into the Chase Sapphire Lounge, and what wonders it might contain. He laughs and replies, "No way, man. But can't you get in with your press pass?"

SATURDAY, 7:45 PM Finally, I am safely ensconced in the Chase Sapphire Lounge. Jesus was right, and my press pass has indeed worked like magic. I don't know why I didn't try that before. I've heard via Twitter that the Chase Sapphire Lounge didn't even let people in during the nasty weather, but now that the skies have cleared, here I am, my Baptist church fan and intricately boxed macarons in hand. I'm at peace. I've already sampled the cheese and salami cubes, and they taste like victory. The ceiling in here looks like something out of a Bing Crosby-Bob Hope road movie, where they're hanging out in an oasis under the canopy of a luxurious tent. Home sweet home! Tim snaps a photo or two of me and leaves, on to more interesting subjects. Over my shoulder, I hear the Isley Brothers fire up a set of state-fair classics, and I bounce my head along to "Twist and Shout." Until they decide to kick me out, this definitely seems like the place to be.

@JR1Nelson

IN ROTATION

A Reader staffer shares three musical obsessions, then asks someone (who asks someone else) to take a turn.

JAMIE LUDWIG

Reader associate editor



A customized version of Art Garfunkel's *Scissors Cut* LP, collected in Greg Wooten's book *Marred for Life!* COURTESY OF J&L BOOKS

Föllakzoid, *I* Formed a decade ago in Santiago, Chile, Föllakzoid expand the language of psychedelia with influences from ancient Andean culture, using modern instruments and electronics to create silky, hypnotic music that can transport heady rockers and dance-club fanatics alike. Föllakzoid typically record their albums live in a single take, but the four pieces on the upcoming *I* consist of dozens of vocal and instrumental stems recorded in isolation and then reorganized by producer Atom TM. I'm already looking forward to seeing how they re-create this vibe onstage.

Greg Wooten, *Marred for Life!* Los Angeles record collector Greg Wooten has been seeking out LPs with scribbles, notes, collages, and artwork added by previous owners, and he recently released more than 250 favorites in a book edited by Jason Fulford. For every blacked-out tooth, Hitler 'stache, or cartoon penis, there's a more inventive defacement, including some that raise hard questions: Who melted Judy Collins's face? And what would John Denver sound like if he were the kind of guy to wear googly-eye glasses?

Drahla, *Useless Coordinates* British art-rock trio Drahla have only been making music together for a few years, but they've already made some impressive fans: last year Robert Smith handpicked them to play London's Meltdown festival. Their latest release, *Useless Coordinates*, is a fresh, immersive post-punk adventure that touches on identity, self-expression, and modern life, made more riveting by skronky sax.

BRENT FUSCALDO

Bassist and vocalist in Mako Sica

Various artists, *String of Pearls: International 78s* A 2009 collection of rare 78s by the fine folks at Mississippi and Canary Records, spanning the 1920s through the '50s. It includes flamenco singer La Niña de los Peines, whose powerful voice disappeared from the limelight around the Spanish Civil War. The liner notes tell a powerful story about another track: Sholom Katz from Romania was digging his own grave in Auschwitz, along with thousands of other prisoners, and when his captors heard his rich baritone singing they were so moved that they spared him from death.

Cantor Sholom Katz appears on the compilation *String of Pearls: International 78s*. LESTER KRAUSS



Cocteau Twins, *The Box Set* This group hasn't left my rotation since high school. Recently at Reckless I found this out-of-print 1991 box set featuring ten CD singles, complete with original artwork by Vaughan Oliver of 23 Envelope. Liz Fraser's vocals are sculpted masterpieces, and Robin Guthrie's textured production swells and dips like the ocean. The introspective "Quisquose" off *Aikea-Guinea* threads a shadowy piano backbone with a chorus that blooms like a colorful orchid.

Harold Budd, *The Pavilion of Dreams* I discovered composer Harold Budd through his 1986 project *The Moon and the Melodies* with members of Cocteau Twins. The 1978 release *The Pavilion of Dreams* has an all-star cast that includes Gavin Bryars and Brian Eno (who also produced). Opening track "Bismillah 'Rahman 'Rahim" (Arabic for "In the name of God, the beneficent, the merciful") features the gorgeous harp of Maggie Thomas and the serene saxophone of Marion Brown.

MARK SHIPPY

Guitarist and sound experimentalist

Michael Small, theme to *The Parallax View* (1974) Michael Small composed the themes for many classic 1970s paranoid thrillers, including those for *The Stepford Wives*, *Marathon Man*, and *The China Syndrome*. His use of the unnerving flattened fifth conveys suspense and drama in a very direct manner; there's an urgency like the calm before a storm. This theme is always a strange pleasure to come back to—it's inspired various open tunings I use on my instruments too.

Bus 711, Carbridge Toro BYD Electric Bus (audio) Along with mysterious shortwave radio emanations and ambient noise from the ether, I'm inspired by odd machine sounds. I had the good fortune of having a record store in my hometown whose back-room vault held all sorts of series of field recordings, including locomotive engines and switches. I've also always been drawn to music that sounds like trains and to many songs about trains or traveling by train (like Vashti Bunyan's "Train Song"). Now that I've heard this recording, I'm thinking of writing a new "folk song" for the electric bus.

Ellen Arkbro, *For Organ and Brass* (2017) This piece builds so perfectly; it has an uneasy peacefulness that can also be found in spectral music and the whirr of rotor-stator generators. Like many Morton Feldman works, it gets you anticipating "something" . . . but you're not sure what. It resonates nicely in the mind; its sonic environment is easy to recall, even when you aren't listening to it, and helps block out the detritus when needed. ♪



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PICK OF THE WEEK

Puerto Rican punks Davila 666 are back from the dead



QUIQUE CABANILLAS

DAVILA 666, RUNNING

Thu 7/25, 9:30 PM, Sleeping Village, 3734 W. Belmont, \$18. 21+

UNTIL LAST MONTH, Puerto Rican six-piece Davila 666 had been quiet since 2011. The riotous outfit had earned a reputation as one of the best live bands in the world, fusing stripped-down, hard-hitting punk with psych ambience and garage-rock melodies: each sweaty set was a nonstop high-energy barrage of beyond-catchy tunes, with every member of the band screaming out the words over the top. When the Davilas went their separate ways (like the Ramones before them, they all share the same last name), some stayed the course while others explored new musical identities: bassist AJ Davila went on to front a Davila 666-flavored punk band called Terror Amor, while lead vocalist Charles Davila went a completely different route with the hip-hop trio Fuede Billete. Earlier this year, the band played a couple of reunion shows in their native Santurce, a district of San Juan, and they soon decided it was time to dive back in all over again. Davila 666's first single out of retirement, "Huesos Viejos," is a midtempo stomper that lays out all the band's greatness again, including their fuzzed-out guitars and layered vocal arrangements. They've also finished a new LP, *Que Viva el Veneno* (due later this year on In the Red), which they began working on before their hiatus in 2011. Opening tonight's show are local noise punks Running, a band that like Davila 666 have spent the past few years in a semifunctioning state, creeping out of the woodwork right when you need them the most. —**LUCA CIMARUSTI**

THURSDAY 25

DAVILA 666 See *Pick of the Week* at left. *Running* opens. 9:30 PM, *Sleeping Village*, 3734 W. Belmont, \$18. 21+

FRIDAY 26

ALMA AFROBEAT ENSEMBLE *Ésso and Seres de Luz* open. 9 PM, *Martyrs*, 3855 N. Lincoln, \$15. 21+

For the fourth year in a row, Barcelona-based guitarist Aaron Feder brings his Alma Afrobeat Ensemble on a U.S. tour. The group, which Feder founded in Champaign-Urbana in 2003, consists of members from several nations, and as is customary when they travel in the States, they're joined by their American touring musicians—Matthew Engel on keys and backing vocals, Cody Jensen on percussion, Joshua Thomson on alto sax, Eddie Quiroga on trombone, and Dr. Adrian Barnett on tenor sax. This year's configuration also features lead vocalist Marga Mbande, a powerful, velvet-voiced singer who was born in Barcelona to parents from the Kombe people of Equatorial Guinea; she sings in English, Spanish, Catalán, and Kombe. Alma Afrobeat's current tour showcases material from their fourth studio album, the recent *Monkey See, Monkey Do* (Slow Walk), whose grooves build upon the pioneering sounds of Fela Kuti and Tony Allen and take them in surprising, eclectic directions. They occasionally add touches of hip-hop, blues, and reggae as well as instruments not typically used in Afrobeat, including bassoon, Dobro, and banjo. Despite these stylistic departures, *Monkey See, Monkey Do* hews to Afrobeat's foundations in its response to the need for social change: in a 2018 conversation with the website Nuvo, Feder explained that the album's title and many of its tunes refer to the risks of blindly following leaders rather than one's own conscience. And onstage Alma Afrobeat Ensemble stay true to another Afrobeat principle: their heavily horn- and percussion-driven tunes keep everyone busting out their best moves on the dance floor. —**CATALINA MARIA JOHNSON**

MOUNTAIN MOVERS *Junegrass, Traysh, and DJ Eye Vybes* open. 9:30 PM, *Hideout*, 1354 W. Wabansia, \$8. 21+

The Mountain Movers are among my current faves, because they know how to freak the fuck out. Formed in the mid-2000s, the Connecticut band started as a showcase for the songs of New Haven indie rocker Dan Greene, and since then their cosmic trajectory has been eerily similar to that of many mid-60s rock groups who started out playing fairly straightforward pop but ventured into blistering psychedelia by the end of the decade. The Mountain Movers put out their debut LP, *We've Walked in Hell and There Is Life After Death*, in 2005 and then rotated through a

cast of east-coasters until Greene linked up with regular bassist (and avowed heavy head) Rick Omonte. The band adopted a slightly more folk-psych vibe for 2010's *Apple Mountain*, and by the 2015 album *Death Magic* the Mountain Movers had filled out a stable lineup with drummer Ross Menze and guitar shredder Kryssi Battalaine (who leads the tripped-out Headroom, with whom Omonte frequently collaborates). They also changed musical direction again, writing new tunes that spiraled into elongated improvisational jams. This new sonic plan crystallized on the 2016 cassingle "Sunday Drive" b/w "No Plans," where the Mountain Movers spread out into long-form Germanic motorik territory in two excursions that lasted more than eight minutes apiece. For their self-titled 2017 release, this crew of cosmonauts signed to local label Trouble in Mind and headed further into the heart of the sun—bookending the LP with two expansive tracks that run past the ten-minute mark. On last year's *Pink Skies* the Mountain Movers make completely fresh-sounding jam rock that also recalls the best aspects of discordant 90s noise-rock bands from the east coast (Dustdevils, Vermonster, Luxurious Bags) and New Zealand (Trash, Scorched Earth Policy). At the same time, they maintain a dynamic, psyched-out 60s west-coast flavor—and an Eastern vibe not unlike Anatolian rock stars Bunalim or Erkin Koray. Though written-out tunes remain at the core of the Mountain Movers' music, onstage they head into uncharted realms that are best felt in the moment—if you head out to this gig, in other words, smoke 'em if you got 'em. —**STEVE KRAKOW**

RESAVOIR *Yadda Yadda and Lake James* open. 9:30 PM, *Sleeping Village*, 3734 W. Belmont, \$12. 21+

Over the past few years, trumpeter Will Miller has beavered away on a bedroom jazz project called Resavoir while juggling other gigs, most notably in popular country-soul group Whitney. About a year ago Miller finally brought Resavoir to life, tapping into his network of talented Chicago friends to form a full-fledged band: saxophonist Irvin Pierce, bassist Lane Beckstrom, drummers Peter Manheim and Jeremy Cunningham, and keyboardist-vocalist Akenya Seymour. Some of these collaborators have, like Miller, made their names outside jazz; Beckstrom played in genre-splicing indie band Kids These Days, and Seymour served as bandleader for rapper Noname (that doesn't even get into guests such as indie-pop wizard Knox Fortune and rapper, singer, and multi-instrumentalist Sen Morimoto). On their recent self-titled debut, released by Chicago's cutting-edge International Anthem label, Resavoir display a sure grasp of jazz and an advanced gift for performing as a unit. Together they fill the album's lush, compact tracks with energy, finding ways to punch up even its most animated moments—Pierce's limber solo on the supple, retro-tinged "Taking Flight," for example, gets more and more ornate as it progresses. International Anthem focuses on jazz that bleeds into contemporary pop, and it's already shaping the



Alma Afrobeat Ensemble MARTA BOSCH VILARRUBIAS

sounds of the future—a project that Resavoir fits into neatly. I'd definitely welcome more pop music that sounds like "Escalator," which pairs Morimoto's tight, rapid raps with blinking synths, snaking horns, and peripatetic percussion. —**LEOR GALIL**

SATURDAY 27

SIDNEY GISH *Another Michael opens. 9:30 PM, Beat Kitchen, 2100 W. Belmont, \$13. 17+*

Few emerging songwriters have captivated me in quite the same way as Boston's Sidney Gish. On her breakout album, 2017's *No Dogs Allowed*, she confronts her life experience with wit and fun, using self-aware lyrics and refined layers of guitars, vocals, and drums. The record—whose goofy, surrealistic cover prominently displays the Microsoft Paint toolbar—comes following Gish's 2016 debut full-length, *Ed Buys Houses*, plus an EP and two compilations she describes as "dump albums" (that is, she used them to share rough material she didn't want to develop formally). As she writes in the Bandcamp description for her second collection, 2016's *Dummy Parade*, "Even if you make shitty scrappy music, you're still making music, and if you make some album art and haphazardly glue all those songs together, it's legit. Go out and make art." On first listen, Gish's observations about herself, particularly about how she interacts with others, can float benignly by, but deeper attention reveals an emotional maturity that might move listeners to reflect on their own behaviors and relationships—and her straightforward delivery provides the perfect vehicle for this process. Gish brings the vibe of her recordings to her stripped-down live shows,

where she performs solo and uses a loop pedal to re-create melodies, chords, and percussion tracks. It's an economical approach that doesn't sacrifice her poppy wholesomeness or her life-affirming messages. —**IZZY YELLEN**

JAWBOX See also Sunday. *The Pauses open. 7:30 PM, Metro, 3730 N. Clark, sold out.*

It's a cliché to describe rock as "angular," but it's shorter than saying "influenced by a handful of important D.C. posthardcore bands, including Jawbox." Formed in 1989 by vocalist and guitarist J. Robbins, bassist Kim Colletta, and drummer Adam Wade, Jawbox finessed the anthemic sound of D.C. punk into their own idiosyncratic style, which was both rhythmically adventurous and sweetly melodic. Jawbox soon recruited second guitarist and vocalist Bill Barbot, then reached their final form in 1992 after the departure of Wade, who joined art punks Shudder to Think and was replaced by Zach Barocas. In 1993, Jawbox signed to Atlantic and became one of two bands ever to leave the unimpeachably independent label Dischord for a major (the other being Shudder to Think). The move was controversial among Jawbox's anticorporate fans and peers, but despite the intrascene tensions the band stirred up, Jawbox produced two of their best albums with Atlantic (coreleased by DeSoto, the indie label Colletta has run since 1991). The 1994 release *For Your Own Special Sweetheart* is their masterpiece, and it contains their best-known song, "Savory"—which they played at their first gig since breaking up in 1997, a one-off reunion in 2009 on *Late Night With Jimmy Fallon*. Jawbox's self-titled 1996 swan song didn't get quite as much recognition, but I've got a soft spot for it, especially the nervy ➔

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09/15 THE MIDNIGHT
09/16 REVOCATION & VOIVOD
09/19 – 09/22 COLD WAVES VIII
09/23 WILDER WOODS
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MUSIC

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"Won't Come Off," where Robbins and Barbot show off their rich vocal harmonies. Jawbox are closing out a 12-date reunion jaunt with two shows at Metro, though their fans are still so devoted that the tour could've kept going for months. The deliberate brevity of this trip suggests that the time to catch the band is now. —LEOR GALIL

SMASH MOUTH Part of RidgeFest. *Smash Mouth* headline; Eric Chesser, *Dreams*, and *Dancing Noodles* open. 10:30 PM (gates at 5:30 PM), Freedom Park, 6252 Birmingham, Chicago Ridge, \$10. 

I'm sure you're expecting a takedown here, since at some point in the past two decades it apparently became unforgivable for a band to record a phoned-in cover of "I'm a Believer" for a family movie starring an animated green ogre. I don't blame anyone who sees Smash Mouth as a joke, since they've squandered much of their early promise, but I do wish more people could remember the band's ingenuity. Formed in San Jose, California, in 1994, Smash Mouth started life by cutting an unusual path through ska's third wave, showing how much fun they could have by dialing back the hardcore aggression and mixing in smooth, straightforward pop melodies. Their 1997 debut, *Fush Yu Mang* (Interscope), has Warped Tour brattiness to spare but also a spark of original personality; their breakthrough single, "Walkin' on the Sun," still gives off an effervescent cool thanks to the fuzzy guitar hooks of songwriter Greg Camp. Smash Mouth departed even more dramatically from the scene that birthed them with 1999's *Astro Lounge*, a pop-focused stylistic jumble with plenty of shoulda-been hits and one massive single: "All Star." At the time, the band's style of alternative rock was as commonplace as elevator music, but "All Star" transcended genre, blending nasty rock 'tude and goofy radio-pop euphoria into a Jock Jam for nerds. Camp envisioned it as an anthem anyone could find inspiring—or at least find catchy enough to sing along to. Its lyrics read like cleverly crafted slogans, often tongue-in-cheek and earnest at once: the feeling of powerlessness about climate change, for instance, coexists with a joke about how to live through it ("My world's on fire, how about yours? / That's the way I like it and I never get bored"). Front man Steve Harwell provides the final piece of the puzzle, delivering Camp's words with the exact right amount of self-aware bombast to keep the song permanently stuck in America's hippocampus. So many teens, tweens, and other adolescents are still making Smash Mouth memes that in February—a full 20 years after "All Star" came out—the song became a hit all over again, reaching number four on the *Billboard* Rock Streaming Songs chart. I hope these younger listeners also take time to give Smash Mouth's newer material a listen. The group's most recent album, 2012's *Magic* (429), is certainly no *Astro Lounge*, but Smash Mouth can still write good hooks—and despite its "Old Man Yells at Cloud" vibe, the song "Justin Bieber" offers some real pop joy. —LEOR GALIL



Peter Frampton  AUSTIN LORD

SUNDAY28

PETER FRAMPTON Jason Bonham's *Led Zeppelin Evening* opens. 7:30 PM, Huntington Bank Pavilion at Northerly Island, 1300 S. Linn White, \$49.50-\$159.50. 

Peter Frampton's got a right to sing the blues. The versatile guitarist recently revealed he has a degenerative muscle disorder called inclusion body myositis, which means his fingers might eventually stop letting him play his treasured instruments, including his iconic Les Paul. The diagnosis is a cruel blow for Frampton, who while still a teenager played in several 60s British rock bands, joining the Herd and cofounding Humble Pie, and then launched his solo career in 1971; at age 69, he's still writing music and touring. Despite his decades in the business, Frampton is arguably best known for the 1976 live double album *Frampton Comes Alive!* (A&M), which remains one of the best-selling concert albums in rock history, documenting his melody-driven songs and guitar chops as well as the vibe at his shows—he keeps up a playful back-and-forth with his audience, whose energy explodes when he uses his signature talk box. Since his diagnosis, Frampton has been recording furiously in his Nashville studio, and the products of that labor include the material on last month's *All Blues* (UMe), an album of covers such as B.B. King's "The Thrill Is Gone" and Hoagy Carmichael's "Georgia on My Mind." The album, which debuted at number one on the *Billboard* blues chart, isn't Frampton's first foray into the genre; not only did he play bluesy tunes with Humble Pie back in the day, but he's also jammed with King and other blues legends. The tunes on *All Blues* let Frampton's virtuoso guitar work sing: He brings in Kim Wilson of the Fabulous Thunderbirds to play harmonica on the album's first track, the Willie Dixon classic "I Just Want to Make Love to You," and performs a version that's more reminiscent of Muddy Waters's original than Foghat's hit hard-rock version. For "The Thrill Is Gone," slide guitarist Sonny Landreth accompanies Frampton and his band, and the nearly six-minute track paints a picture of heartbreak that a

lesser guitarist couldn't pull off. Frampton kicked off his farewell tour last month, and one dollar from each ticket purchase will benefit the Peter Frampton Myositis Research Fund. During these emotional, career-spanning shows, Frampton will play cuts from *All Blues*, work his legendary talk box, and throw in some covers of the Beatles and Soundgarden. —KIRSTEN LAMBERT

JAWBOX See Saturday. *The Life and Times* open. 7:30 PM, Metro, 3730 N. Clark, \$28. 🍷

LEGENDARY SHACK SHAKERS *The Krank Daddies and Curio* open. 7 PM, Reggies' Music Joint, 2105 S. State, \$15. 21+

Led by charismatic vocalist and harmonica player J.D. Wilkes, the Legendary Shack Shakers present an interesting take on the psychobilly theme. Formed in Kentucky and now based in Nashville, this group has been blending roots, country, rock 'n' roll, and punk for more than two decades. While many of their contemporaries' styles seem to start and end with the Cramps and the Reverend Horton Heat, the Shack Shakers have a definite prewar-country influence buried underneath their foot stomping, distortion, and punk intensity. Extra props go to Wilkes for using the harmonica as



Nilüfer Yanya
© MOLLY DANIELS

a legit rock instrument rather than as a space filler a la Bob Dylan: it's right up front in the mix on the Shack Shakers' albums, the most recent of which is 2017's *After You've Gone* (Last Chance), and the way Wilkes's playing complements the music echoes the best harp-driven blues bands. While the albums are definitely worth getting, the Shack Shakers' live show is no joke: expect a hillbilly Iggy Pop with a harmonica mike in his hand, plus a few other things you hadn't bargained on. These guys came to shake the shack, not shrink. —JAMES PORTER

"WEIRD AL" YANKOVIC WITH THE RAVINIA FESTIVAL ORCHESTRA 8:30 PM, Ravinia, 418 Sheridan, Highland Park, \$48-\$90. 🍷

"Weird Al" Yankovic . . . with a symphony? That's right—the paragon of parody has added orchestral accompaniment for his current Strings Attached tour. At each stop, local musicians will juxtapose their symphonic grandeur with Yankovic's musical goofiness. It's particularly apt for the highbrow vibes of Ravinia, but longtime Al fans shouldn't fret; his set promises to include the nonsensical costume changes, props, and video projections that make his live show such a blast. Five years removed from his most recent album, *Mandatory Fun* (RCA), Yankovic has built a set list reflective of his career, full of big hits and fan favorites. Classic parodies ➔

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8.11 JIM BRICKMAN

8.12 TALISK

8.15 ARI HEST

8.16 MINDI ABAIR & THE BONESHAKERS

UPCOMING SHOWS

7.26 LOUIS PRIMA JR. & THE WITNESSES

8.1 JOHN MAYALL

8.2 MARSHA AMBROSIOUS

8.11 ROSS MATHEWS - DRAGTASTIC BUBBLY BRUNCH

8.13-14 DAVE MASON

8.18 THE THE BAND BAND TRIBUTE TO THE BAND

8.19 MATT WERTZ

8.20 OMAR VS. MARK DE CLIVE-LOWE

8.21 SURABHI ENSEMBLE

8.22 JOHN WAITE AND HIS BAND

8.23 MAX WEINBERG'S JUKEBOX

8.25 HOWARD HEWETT (OF SHALAMAR)

8.26 PETER COLLINS

8.27-29 LALAH HATHAWAY

8.30 MPG - MELISSA POLINAR, JEREMY PASSION AND GABE BONDOC

8.31 JOHN GORKA

9.1 THE LOTUS KINGS TRIBUTE TO SANTANA

9.3 LEAHY

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TUE
7/30

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BRENT HEYL (DJ SET)

FRI
7/26

5PM-FREE

HARD COUNTRY HONKY TONK WITH
THE HOYLE BROTHERS

BANDITOS
FLESH PANTHERS • DAVID QUINN

SAT
7/27

6PM-FREE

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WED
7/31

6PM-FREE

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EMILY NOTT • DJ DUCKETT (OF CHICAGO HONKY TONK)

THU
8/1

AWFUL (EP RELEASE)
TOUCHED BY GHOUL • BOYBRAIN • DJ ANDY RYAN

FRI
8/2

OFFICIAL LOLLAPALOOZA AFTERSHOW FEAT.
MAGIC CITY HIPPIES

SUN
7/28

11AM-FREE

BLEAK BRUNCH WITH DJ MIKE VALLERA

3PM-FREE

EMPTY BOTTLE BOOK CLUB DISCUSSES
'WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT KEVIN'
BY LIONEL SHRIVER

CITY OF DJINN (RECORD RELEASE)
MYKEL BOYD • DREKKA • SWIM IGNORANT FIRE • NAXO

SAT
8/3

OFFICIAL LOLLAPALOOZA AFTERSHOW FEAT.
(SANDY) ALEX G
THE FUNS

8/4: HESH & THE HELLFIRE (2PM-FREE), 8/4: THINK NO THINK, 8/5: SPUN OUT (FREE), 8/6: DESERT LIMINAL, 8/7: SURFBORT, 8/8: THROWAWAY, 8/9: MIDWEST ACTION SHOWCASE, 8/10: 2ND ANNUAL SUMMER EUCRE TOURNAMENT (11AM), 8/10: YAKUZA, 8/11: THE HOLY CIRCLE, 8/12: KING KHAN & BBQ SHOW, 8/13: BEDON, 8/15: CHERUBS, 8/16: ALLAH-LAHS, 8/17 @ HALF ACRE - BALMORAL BREWERY: HALF ACRE BEER COMPANY'S THE BIG NORTH IV (4PM), 8/18: GIRL K (SINGLE RELEASE), 8/19: BLACK TAFFY (FREE), 8/23: THE HOLD STEADY, 8/24: HIDE (RECORD RELEASE), 8/25: THE FIELD, 8/26: HOVDY • LOMELDA, 8/28: TERRIERS, 8/30-8/31: SCORCHED TUNRA XI

NEW ON SALE: 9/1: LOONA DAE, 9/4: BRAIN TENTACLES • CHILD BITE, 9/5: THE APPLESEED CAST, 9/10: GIUDA, 9/19: WOLF EYES, 10/3: EARTHLESS, 10/4: SIR BABYGIRL, 10/21: PENELOPE ISLES, 11/1-11/2: VIVIAN GIRLS

MUSIC



Resavoir
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such as “Amish Paradise” and “White & Nerdy” sit alongside Yankovic originals such as “The Biggest Ball of Twine in Minnesota” and “Harvey the Wonder Hamster.” But this time around, the show will also have a special cinematic flair, including movie themes (during an orchestral warm-up) and a tribute to *Star Wars* (to close the night). Fans of Yankovic’s 1989 cult-classic movie *UHF* also will get a kick out of Stanley Spadowski’s “Fun Zone,” which starts the main program. You may not get a better chance this summer to see something so totally epic and wickedly funny—and with Ravinia breaking out its lawn video screen, folks in the cheap seats won’t miss out on a moment of the fun. —SCOTT MORROW

WEDNESDAY31

NILÜFER YANYA *Pixx opens. 9 PM, Sleeping Village, 3734 W. Belmont, sold out. 21+*

On the new double album *Miss Universe* (ATO), British singer Nilüfer Yanya straddles the line between indie rock and pop. It’s catchy, hip, and radio ready, with a perfect production sheen that helps the music’s disparate influences slide smoothly one into another. “In Your Hand” sounds like it came from the new wave era of the 80s, with crunchy guitars and Yanya singing with clipped robotic precision—and occasionally breaking into an equally robotic falsetto yodel. “Paradise” is chill-out trip-hop, complete with lounge sax and bubbling electronic beat. “Monsters Under the Bed” is based on the type of stripped-down acoustic-guitar number favored by the likes of Cat Power, with Yanya moving into her upper register to warble like Sinead O’Connor. And “Safety Net” is a full-on pop song, with a ridiculously big anthem chorus (“I’ll never be a safety net / It doesn’t matter what you get”) that’ll get jammed in your head for days. Even when Yanya shoots for the stadium seats, she keeps her individual touch—during an odd break in “Safety Net,” most of the instrumentation drops out and Yanya repeatedly moans “instead” against a sparse, echoey background. The title *Miss Universe* suggests both beauty pageants and cosmic conquest; it’s Yanya’s bid for pop stardom and for validation as an eclectic artistic, and so far, she’s been remarkably successful at both. —NOAH BERLATSKY

FESTIVALS

Celebrate diversity, food, and live music at three neighborhood festivals

BANTU FESTIVAL

The fifth edition of this fest celebrating diversity and cultural exchange features food, dance, and vendors representing 30 countries. Entertainment includes kids’ activities and live music from Syleena Johnson, Dee Alexander, D’Lux, and more.

Sat 7/27 and Sun 7/28, 10 AM-10 PM, Midway Plaisance, 60th and Ellis, \$5-\$10. [ML](#)

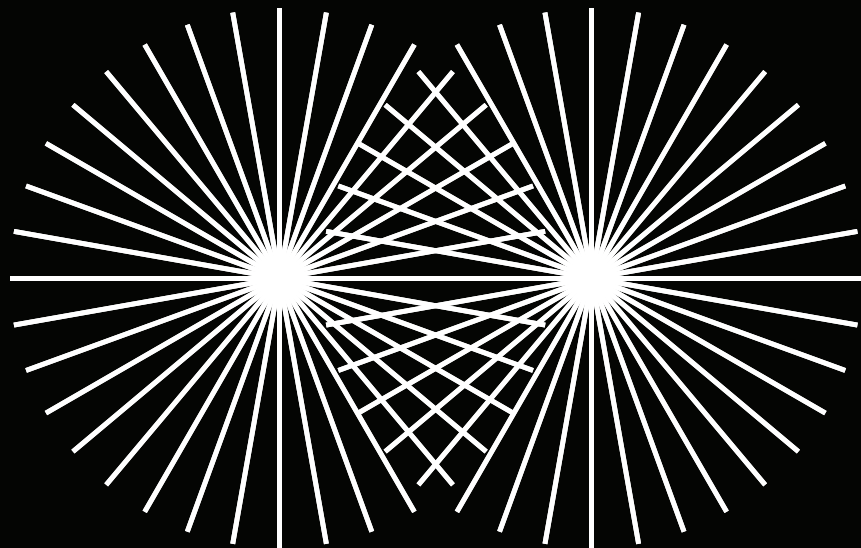
TASTE OF LINCOLN AVENUE

This neighborhood festival combines live music and family-friendly activities with tastings of whiskey, wine, and chocolate. The music bookings include cover bands (Bruce in the USA, Sixteen Candles), Lucky Boys Confusion, and Horseshoes & Hand Grenades. Sat 7/27 and Sun 7/28, noon-10 PM, Lincoln between Wrightwood and Fullerton, \$10 for adults, kids admitted free to the Kids Area. [ML](#)

WICKER PARK FEST

Arguably the mother of all Chicago street fests (at least for music geeks), Wicker Park Fest features three stages of live music, with punk, electronic, hip-hop, indie rock, roots, and much more. We’d list all our faves if we had the space, but this year’s highlights include Open Mike Eagle, Superchunk, Future Rootz, and Screaming Females. Fri 8/26, 5-10 PM, Sat 7/27 and Sun 7/28, noon-10 PM, Milwaukee between Paulina and Damen, \$10 suggested donation. [ML](#)

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GOSSIP WOLF

A furry ear to the ground of the local music scene

MARWAN KAMEL and **Micah Bezold**, aka local duo **City of Djinn**, have been playing together for more than ten years, including a stretch in underrated doom-crust band **Al-Thawra** that produced several excellent recordings. They met jamming after hours with North African musicians at a Tunisian restaurant where Kamel worked and Bezold was a regular. Kamel describes City of Djinn as “post-tarab,” and their long-form psychedelic drone rock draws from experimental music as well as traditional Arabic maqam. In 2015, the duo dropped the sublime *Ether* and *Red Sulphur* via downstate label **Somnimage**, and on Friday, July 26, they’re finally following it up (on the same label) with a **self-titled album** full of dazzling cuts that meander languidly around complex, beautiful melodies. On Sunday, July 28, City of Djinn celebrate at the **Empty Bottle** with openers Naxö, Swim Ignorant Fire, and Mikel Boyd & Drekkia.

Last year, Chicago students of color formed antiviolence organization **Good Kids Mad City** after the school shooting in Parkland, Florida. GKMC’s goals include providing activities for urban youth, and on Saturday, July 27, it’s throwing a **Peace Beach Party** to honor recent victims of gun violence and the Black Chicagoans who died in the Red Summer race riots of 1919. The music lineup includes superstar-in-waiting **Queen Key** and unimpeachable rapper-producer **Tree**, and the party runs from 4 to 9 PM at **31st Street Beach**. Registration is free at bit.ly/gkmc.bp.

On Tuesday, July 30, the **Hideout** hosts a fund-raiser and launch party for **Pussypedia**, a volunteer-run encyclopedia of the vagina assembled by more than 200 people on three continents. Cofounder **Zoe Mendelson** will demo the site, and the festivities also feature a covers set from Sima Cunningham and Macie Stewart of **Ohmme**, comedy from **Sarah Squirm**, and a DJ set by **Cqchifruit**. The party starts at 8 PM, and admission is a \$10 suggested donation. —**J.R. NELSON AND LEOR GALIL**

Got a tip? Tweet @Gossip.Wolf or e-mail gossipwolf@chicagoreader.com.

CHICAGO SHOWS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT IN THE WEEKS TO COME

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Bilal KAWAI MATTHEWS

NEW

Accidentals 10/4, 8 PM, Szold Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music, on sale Fri 7/26, 9 AM **Allah-Las** 11/27, 10 PM, Thalia Hall, on sale Fri 7/26, 10 AM, 17+ **Robert Armani, K-Alexi, John Simmons** 8/16, 10 PM, Smart Bar **Avenues, Divided Heaven, Nora Marks** 9/29, 8 PM, GMan Tavern **Bad Gyal** 10/5, 9 PM, Sleeping Village **The Band Perry, Phangs** 10/25, 8 PM, the Vic **Batushka** 12/10, 8 PM, Metro, on sale Fri 7/26, 1 PM, 18+ **Beautifulish, Mega Laverne and Shirley, Three Hands Clapping** 8/4, 8:30 PM, Constellation, 18+ **Bedon, Big Syn, Fernando House** 8/13, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle **Bilal** 10/13, 5 and 8 PM, City Winery, on sale Fri 7/26, noon **Brant Bjork, Ecstatic Vision** 9/27, 8 PM, Reggies’ Rock Club, 17+ **Black Lips** 9/27, 9:30 PM, Sleeping Village **Black Road, Lucid Furs, Count** 8/9, 8 PM, Cobra Lounge, 17+ **Brad Stank** 10/6, 7 PM, Schubas **Brain Tentacles, Child Bite** 9/4, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle **Brokeback, Chris Brokaw, Mark Charles Morgan** 8/11, 8:30 PM, Hideout **Toranzo Cannon** 10/1, 7 PM, FitzGerald’s, Berwyn, on sale Fri 7/26, 11 AM **Craig Cardiff** 10/27, 8 PM, Schubas, 18+ **Ceremony, Choir Boy** 9/3, 7 PM, Thalia Hall, on sale Wed 7/24, 10 AM **C.H.E.W., Ribbonhead,**

Snuffed 8/27, 9:30 PM, Sleeping Village **Chicago Westside Music Festival with Faith Evans, Monifah, Da Brat, Crucial Conflict** 8/17, 2 PM, Douglas Park **FREE** **Claudettes, Kid Bear** 9/5, 8 PM, FitzGerald’s, Berwyn, on sale Fri 7/26, 11 AM **Dave B** 8/9, 9 PM, Subterranean, 17+ **Devotchka** 10/5, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston, on sale Fri 7/26, 10 AM **Early November, Have Mercy, Owel** 10/9, 8 PM, Bottom Lounge 17+ **Emotional Oranges, Chiild** 10/5, 8:30 PM, Metro, on sale Fri 7/26, 10 AM **Faint, Ritual Howls, Closeness** 8/9, 8 PM, House of Blues, 17+ **Fit for an Autopsy** 11/21, 6 PM, Reggies’ Rock Club, 17+ **Rosie Flores** 8/25, 7 PM, Szold Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music, on sale Fri 7/26, 9 AM **Kinky Friedman** 11/16, 10 PM, SPACE, Evanston, on sale Fri 7/26, 10 AM **Robbie Fulks** 10/18, 8 PM, City Winery, on sale Fri 7/26, noon **G-Rex & Zeke Beats** 12/5, 8:30 PM, Chop Shop, 18+ **Galactic ft. Anjelika Jelly Joseph, Star Kitchen** 10/18, 9 PM, Park West, on sale Fri 7/26, 10 AM, 18+ **Gianni & Kyle** 9/8, 7 PM, Subterranean, on sale Wed 7/24, noon **Goblin, Gigan, Lion’s Daughter** 11/7, 8 PM, Reggies’ Rock Club, 18+ **Golden Features** 9/6, 8:30 PM, Chop Shop, on sale Thu 7/25, 10 AM, 18+ **Julia Govor** 10/4, 9 PM, Cerise **Gov’t Mule** 9/27, 8 PM, Riviera

Theatre, on sale Fri 7/26, 10 AM, 18+ **Tracy Grammer** 9/14, 8 PM, Szold Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music, on sale Fri 7/26, 9 AM **Greyhounds** 9/25, 8 PM, FitzGerald’s, Berwyn, on sale Fri 7/26, 11 AM **High on Fire, Power Trip, Devil Master, Creeping Death** 11/27, 7 PM, Metro, on sale Fri 7/26, 10 AM, 18+ **Hildegard: An Unfinished Revolution** live album recording 12/8, 7:30 PM, Sleeping Village **Kelly Hogan, Scott Ligon, Nora O’Connor** 9/20, 6 PM, Hideout **Brendan James** 11/16, 7 PM, SPACE, Evanston, on sale Fri 7/26, 10 AM **Angela James and friends** 9/6, 6 PM, Hideout **Mason Jennings** 11/30, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston, on sale Fri 7/26, 10 AM **Joybird** 8/30, 6 PM, Hideout **Judah & the Lion** 11/2, 7:30 PM, Aragon Ballroom **Joe Kay** 9/6, 9 PM, Bottom Lounge, 17+ **Kid Quill** 9/19, 7 PM, Subterranean, 17+ **Kris Kristofferson & the Strangers** 11/15, 8 PM, Chicago Theatre, on sale Fri 7/26, 10 AM **Charlotte Lawrence, Goody Grace** 11/9, 8 PM, Subterranean, on sale Fri 7/26, 10 AM **Gordon Lightfoot** 9/27, 8 PM, Copernicus Center **Lilbootycall** 9/3, 7 PM, Subterranean **Chris Lorenzo** 10/25, 10 PM, Spy Bar **Bill MacKay & Nathan Bowles** 9/13, 6 PM, Hideout **Matthew Mayfield** 12/8,

7:30 PM, Schubas, 18+ **Edwin McCain** 11/7, 8 PM, City Winery, on sale Fri 7/26, noon **Mersiv, Supertask** 10/11, 9 PM, Bottom Lounge, 17+ **Chrisette Michele** 9/27, 8 PM, Patio Theater **Mondo Cozmo, Liily** 8/2, 11 PM, Subterranean, 17+ **Moonchild** 10/4, 9 PM, Bottom Lounge, on sale Fri 7/26, 10 AM, 17+ **Pentagram, Howling Giant, Black Road** 9/1, 7 PM, Reggies’ Rock Club, 17+ **Lawrence Peters Outfit** 8/23, 6 PM, Hideout **C.J. Ramone, Dog Party, Blind Adam & the Federal League** 8/18, 8 PM, Chop Shop, 18+ **Rasputina, Charming Disaster** 10/26, 8 PM, Subterranean **Tim Reynolds TR3** 12/20, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston, on sale Fri 7/26, 10 AM **Sacha Robotti** 11/9, 4 PM, Electric Hotel **Taylor Rogers, Meagan Hickman, Lucy Little** 9/14, 7 PM, Subterranean, 17+ **Roosevelt (DJ set)** 10/5, 2 PM, Cerise Rooftop at Virgin Hotels Chicago **Chris Shifflett, Cordovas** 9/4, 8 PM, Schubas **Skizzy Mars** 11/11, 7 PM, Metro, on sale Fri 7/26, 10 AM **Sasha Sloan** 11/9, 8 PM, Chop Shop, on sale Fri 7/26, 10 AM **Solicitor, Wraith, Feral Vision** 8/6, 8 PM, Cobra Lounge, 17+ **Songhoy Blues** 10/19, 9 PM, Lincoln Hall, 18+ **South Shore Summer Festival with Robin Thicke, Dante Hall, Johari Noelle, Eli Ramsey, Queen Jlyn, and more** 8/18, 2 PM, South Shore Cultural Center **FREE** **Spafford** 10/18, 9 PM, Thalia Hall, on sale Fri 7/26, 10 AM, 17+ **Amy Speace** 9/21, 8 PM, Szold Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music, on sale Fri 7/26, 9 AM **Spektral Quartet & LJ White** play the Shaggs 8/14, 8:30 PM, Constellation, 18+ **Jon Spencer & the Hitmakers** 8/30, 9 PM, Schubas **Starcrawler** 10/17, 7:30 PM, Lincoln Hall **Steve ‘n’ Seagulls, Clusterpluck** 9/1, 8 PM, Beat Kitchen **Tegan and Sara** 10/15, 8 PM, Cahn Auditorium, Northwestern University, Evanston, on sale Fri 7/26, 10 AM **Tobi Lou, Liltrxpendo, Femdot** 10/20, 8 PM, Lincoln Hall, on sale Fri 7/26, 10 AM **Frank Turner & the Sleeping Souls** 10/17, 7 PM, Athenaeum Theatre **Vivian Girls** 11/1, 9 PM; 11/2, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle

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Jimmy Webb, Robin Spielberg 11/17, 8 PM, City Winery, on sale Fri 7/26, noon **WGCI Summer Jam with Gucci Mane, Yo Gotti, Teyana Taylor, Queen Naija, Polo G** 8/24, 7 PM, Wintrust Arena **Winchesters, Friends of the Bog, Ultra Violet Fever** 9/30, 8 PM, Schubas, 18+ **With Confidence, Seaway, Between You & Me, Doll Skin** 11/30, 6 PM, Bottom Lounge **Worthy, Gene Farris** 8/17, 2 PM, Electric Hotel

UPDATED

Robbie Fulks 8/9, 6 and 9:30 PM, Hideout, 6 PM porch show added **Dean Lewis with James TW** 8/3, 11 PM, Thalia Hall, canceled; refunds available at point of purchase **Mamby on the Beach festival** 8/23-8/24, noon, Montrose Beach, canceled; refunds available at point of purchase **Overstreet, Hudson Thames, Mokita** 8/23, 7 PM, Cobra Lounge, canceled; refunds available at point of purchase **Valee, Qari** 12/28, 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, rescheduled; contact point of purchase for exchange or refund for tickets purchased for 7/18, 17+ **Rachael Yamagata** 9/5, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston, new on sale date Fri 7/26, 10 AM

UPCOMING

Abhi the Nomad, Dave B 10/30, 7:30 PM, Schubas **American Aquarium**, 8/23, 8 PM, Lincoln Hall, 18+ **Cavetown** 10/6, 6:30 PM, Metro **Griz**, 10/5, 5 PM, Navy Pier, 18+ **Japanese House** 10/22, 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+ **Jaymes Young** 11/16, 8 PM, Bottom Lounge **Anders Osborne** 8/17, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston **Radiator Hospital, Izzy True, Outer Spaces** 8/8, 9:30 PM, Sleeping Village **Surabhi Ensemble** 8/21, 8 PM, City Winery **Surfbort** 8/7, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle **Spencer Sutherland** 8/17, 6 PM, Beat Kitchen **Toad the Wet Sprocket** 8/31, 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+ **Toko Telo** 9/10, 8:30 PM, Constellation, 18+

The REPUBLICAN RACISM QUIZ

DO TRUMP
SUPPORTERS HAVE
ANY CONCEPT OF
RACISM LEFT?

CHANTING "SEND HER
BACK" ABOUT A
NATURALIZED AMERICAN
CITIZEN?

NOT
RACIST!

SADISTIC CHILD-ABUSING
POLICIES TOWARDS
ASYLUM SEEKERS?

NOT
RACIST!

CALLING TRUMP A
WHITE NATIONALIST
XENOPHOBE?

WHOA,
NOW THAT'S
RACIST!

SO... RACISM IS SOME-
THING THAT ONLY
HAPPENS TO WHITE
PEOPLE WHEN THEY'RE
BEING RACIST.

GO BACK TO
WHERE YOU
CAME FROM,
YOU RACIST
SCUMBAG!

SORENSEN

OPINION

continued from 41
something you can do right now to decrease your risk of prostate cancer, PPPP: Two large studies found that men who ejaculate frequently—more than 21 times per month—are roughly 35 percent less likely to develop prostate cancer than men who blow fewer loads. So if sticking things up your butt makes you come more often, then science says sticking things up your butt will reduce your risk of prostate cancer.

Researchers don't know exactly why coming a lot may reduce a man's risk for prostate cancer. There's no data to support one frequently mentioned theory—that ejaculation may flush out "irritating or harmful substances" that could be gathering in the prostate along with the fluids that make up roughly 30 percent of a man's seminal fluids—so, again, more research is needed. And until those studies are done, men and other prostate-having people should err on the side of ejaculating as often as (safely and consensually) possible.

As for convincing your otherwise submissive wife to finger your ass, PPPP, you could search for "power bottoms" on the gay section of Pornhub—assuming your wife enjoys gay porn—and familiarize her with the concept of dominant penetrates. You could also add female condoms to your list of hygiene hacks—put one of these trash-can liners in your ass, and the only thing your wife will get on her fingers is lube. But if anal play is a hard no for the wife, you'll have to enjoy anal play solo.

Q: I am a poly nonbinary person, and I've been seeing this guy in a BDSM context for about six months. About two times a month, he canes me and destroys my ass, I get

to call him "daddy," and I get fucked in mind-blowing ways. In the beginning, I expressed interest in dating (with more emotional investment), and he said he didn't have the mental space for it but he'd be interested in trying to develop something eventually. So we've played and had fun, and I'm starting to get feels for this guy ... buuuuut ... he's given me no indication he's interested in anything beyond our current arrangement. I've said, "Hey, let's schedule a date," something like dinner, coffee, a walk around the fucking block, but he just wants to fuck, no talking. What he wants isn't what I'm looking for, so I decided to take my business elsewhere and focus my energy on my other relationships. Well, his mom just got diagnosed with cancer and has a couple months to live. He's devastated. What are the ethics of breaking up here? I dislike just ghosting, but he's got other friends and lovers to support him. He doesn't really need me. But he does on occasion send little "thinking of you" texts. So am I able to ghost him? Do I owe him a conversation about wants and needs? I'd like to be friends—I am part of a small kinky community, I'm friends with some of his fuck buddies, and I'm going to run into him again—but this isn't a time in his life when he should be worrying about the feelings of a now-and-then spanking partner. —GHOSTING HAS OBVIOUS SHORTCOMINGS THAT SUCK

A: You've constructed a false choice for yourself, GHOSTS: either initiate a conversation about your wants and needs or ghost him. But there's no need for a wants-and-needs convo, as you've already had that conversation (more than once) and his don't

align with yours. So instead of disappearing on him, you can simply respond to his "thinking of you" texts with short, thoughtful, compassionate texts of your own. ("Thinking of you, too, especially at this difficult time.") The odds that he'll want to meet up in the next few months seem slim, and you can always claim a scheduling conflict if he should ask to get together.

Being friendly is the trick to remaining friends after a casual sexual arrangement ends. Kindly acknowledging someone's texts—or greeting someone in public—doesn't obligate you to sleep with (or submit to) them again. And while in most cases I would advise a person to be direct, in this case, I think you should simply step back. Calling him to say, "Hey, I know your mom has cancer and is dying, but I needed to tell you I'm not interested in fucking around anymore, OK?" will make you seem self-involved, thoughtless, and uncaring—you know, not the kind of person someone wants to remain friends with after a casual sexual arrangement ends.

Now, if you were this man's primary partner, GHOSTS, and you'd been thinking about ending the relationship before he got the news about his mother, I would encourage you to wait a few months and love and support him through this process. (Unless the relationship was abusive, of course, which this one wasn't.) But you're just a FWB—a "friend with bruises," in your case—and this man has other friends and lovers around him, people whose support he can rely on during this difficult time. 

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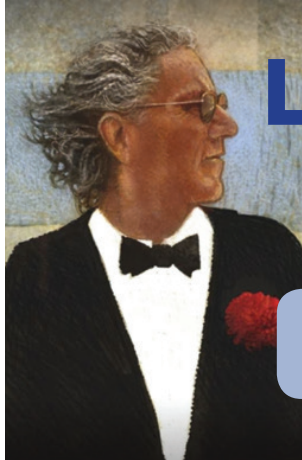


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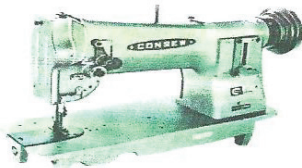
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